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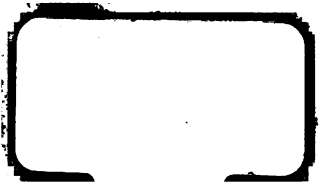

18X
PASCAL

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION.

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

BLAISE PASCAL.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

A NEW EDITION.

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No attempt has been made in the following translation at critical exactness in the arrangement of the matter, or the selection of the French text. The book called "Les Pensées de Pascal" consisting of posthumous fragments on various subjects, and in very different states of elaboration, has been presented to the public in several forms. The earliest editors, his own relatives and friends, not merely selected and arranged the matter in their hands, but took considerable liberties with the language. Their object was to produce a book of practical edification, and they cared more about being correct and avoiding offence than about preserving the very words of Pascal's rough papers. After various additions made to the book, and recasting of its substance, the desire was awakened in France by M. Victor Cousin, to possess a text more genuine than that which had gained currency, and which he shewed to differ considerably from the manuscript remains on which the work was based, and this has led to editions professing

a critical restoration of the text, as well as an amended arrangement of subjects[a]. But though they have in many ways improved on the older editions, they cannot yet be said to have displaced them.

For this reason it has not been thought worth while in a work published simply for religious use, to depart from the form in which the "Thoughts" have gained and still keep their place as a French classic. It comprises only the "Thoughts on Religion," and is chiefly reprinted from an old translation; but this translation has been carefully compared with the original[b].

[a] Such are the editions of Faugère, 1844, and Lefèvre, 1847. An English translation has been made from M. Faugère's edition, with an introduction and notes by George Pearce, Esq. London, 1850.

[b] The text commonly known as the "Pensées de Pascal," is that published by his relatives and friends soon after his death, of which numerous editions have appeared from time to time in France; the one made use of for this purpose was that printed by F. Didot, Paris, 1844.

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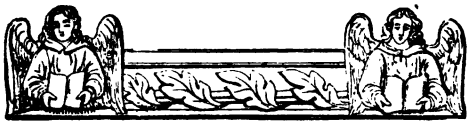

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INDIFFERENCE OF ATHEISTS.

It were to be wished that the enemies of religion would at least learn what it is before they oppose it. Did religion make its boast of having a clear and perfect view of God, and of beholding Him without covering or veil, it might be justly objected, that we see nothing in this world that makes Him known with that kind of evidence. But since religion, on the contrary, declares men to be in a state of darkness, and of estrangement from God; since it affirms him to have withdrawn himself from their discovery, and to have chosen, in His word, the appellation of *a God that hideth Himself*; and lastly, since it is equally employed in establishing these two maxims, that God has left, in His Church, certain characters of Himself, by which He will make Himself known to those who sincerely seek Him; and yet that He has, at the same time, so far shaded and obscured these characters, as to render them imperceptible to those who do not seek Him with their whole heart; what advantage is it to men who profess themselves negligent in the

search of truth, to complain so frequently, that nothing reveals and displays it to them? For this very obscurity under which they labour, and which they object against the Church, does itself evince one of the two grand points which the Church maintains, without affecting the other, and is so far from overthrowing its doctrines, that it manifestly confirms and supports them.

In order to give any weight to their objections, they ought to urge that they have exerted their utmost endeavours, and have used all the means of information which the Church recommends, without obtaining satisfaction. If they could say this, they would indeed attack religion in one of its pretensions: but I hope to shew, in the following papers, that no reasonable person can speak after this manner; and I dare assert that none ever did. We know very well how men act under this indifference of temper; they suppose themselves to have made mighty efforts toward the instruction of their minds, when they have spent some hours in reading the Scriptures, and have asked some questions of a clergyman concerning the articles of faith. When this is done, they declare to all the world that they have consulted books and men without success. But I cannot refrain from telling such men (what I have often told them) that their negligence is insufferable. It is not a foreign or a petty interest which is in dispute: ourselves and our all are at stake.

The immortality of the soul is a thing which so deeply, so infinitely concerns us, that we must have utterly lost all feeling to be cold and indifferent about it. All our actions and thoughts must take so very different a course, according as eternal blessings may or may not be expected, that it is impossible for us to proceed with judgment and discretion, except we keep

this point, which ought ever to be our ultimate object, continually in view.

Thus our highest interest, and our principal duty, is to get light into a subject on which our whole conduct depends. And therefore in the number of wavering and unsatisfied men, I make the greatest difference imaginable between those who do their utmost to obtain instruction, and those who live without ever thinking or troubling themselves about it.

I cannot but feel compassion for those who sincerely grieve at being in this doubtful state of mind; who look upon it as the greatest of misfortunes, and who spare no pains to be delivered from it, by making these researches their chief and most serious employ. But as for those who pass away their life without reflecting on its final issue, and who, merely because they do not find in themselves sufficient evidence to convince them, neglect to seek it elsewhere, and to examine to the bottom whether the opinions proposed be such as men are wont to entertain through credulous simplicity, or such as, though obscure in themselves, are yet built on solid and immoveable foundations, I consider them in a very different light. This carelessness about an affair in which themselves, their eternity, their all is concerned, rather provokes my resentment than engages my pity. Nay, it strikes me with wonder and astonishment; it is a monster to my apprehension. I speak not this from the pious zeal of a rapturous devotion: on the contrary, I affirm that the love of ourselves, the interest of mankind, and the most simple glimmerings of reason, do naturally inspire us with these sentiments; and that to know this, we need only see what persons of the meanest capacities understand.

It requires no great superiority of mind to discover that nothing in this world is productive of true and

solid satisfaction; that all our pleasures are merely vanity, that our troubles are innumerable, and that after all, death, which threatens us every moment, must in a few years, perhaps in a few days, put us into an eternal state of happiness, or misery, or annihilation. Between us and heaven, or hell, or annihilation, there is nothing interposed but life, the mos brittle thing in all the world; now as the happiness of heaven is certainly not designed for those who doubt whether their souls be immortal, such persons have nothing to expect but the miserable chance of annihilation or hell.

Nothing can be more true, and nothing more terrible than this. Let us brave it as we will, in this must end the most splendid life that is spent upon earth.

It is in vain for men to turn aside their thoughts from this eternity which awaits them, as if they were able to destroy it by neglecting to think of it: it subsists in spite of them, it is hastening on, and death, which is to draw the curtain from it, will, in a short time, infallibly reduce them to the dreadful necessity of being for ever annihilated or for ever miserable.

We have here a doubt of the most awful consequence, and to be the subject of it is indisputably a most serious misfortune: but, at the same time, it is an indispensable duty not to remain under it, without inquiring diligently to be delivered from it.

He then who doubts, and seeks not to be resolved, is equally unhappy and unjust: but if withal he is easy and contented, if he freely avows his indifference, and, above all, if he takes a pride in professing it, and makes this most deplorable condition the subject of his vanity and pleasure, I have not words to fix a name on so extravagant a creature.

Whence can a man derive such sentiments? What

pleasure can there be in expecting nothing but misery without resource? What cause is there for vanity in finding one's-self in impenetrable darkness? Or what consolation in despairing for ever of a comforter?

To be at ease in such ignorance, is a thing so monstrous, that they who live in it ought to be aroused to a sense of its stupidity and extravagance, by having their inward reflections laid open before them, that they may be confounded at the prospect of their own folly. For thus it is that men reason, who thus obstinately remain ignorant of what they are, without seeking for information:

"I know not who has sent me into the world; nor what the world is, nor what I am myself. I am shockingly ignorant of all things. I know not what my body is, what my senses are, or what my soul is. This very part of me which thinks what I speak, which reflects upon itself, and upon every thing around me, is yet as ignorant of itself as it is of every thing else. I behold these frightful spaces of the universe with which I am encompassed, and feel myself confined to one little corner of the vast extent, without understanding why I am placed in this part of it rather than in any other; or why the short period of time that is allotted me to live, was assigned to me at this particular point, rather than any other of the whole eternity which was before me, or of that which is to come after me. I see nothing but infinites on all sides, which swallow me up like an atom, or like a shadow, which endures but a single instant, and is never to return. All that I know is, that I must shortly die; but what I am most ignorant of is this very death, from which I cannot escape.

"As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I am going; only this I know, that at my departure

out of the world, I must either be for ever annihilated, or fall into the hands of an incensed God, without being able to decide which of these two conditions will be my everlasting portion.

"Such is my state, so full of weakness, obscurity, and wretchedness. And from all this I conclude, that I ought to pass all the days of my life, without ever considering what is hereafter to befall me; and that I have nothing to do, but to follow my inclinations without reflection or disquiet, doing all that, which, if what is said of a miserable eternity be true, will infallibly plunge me into it. It is possible I might find some light to clear up my doubts; but I will not take the trouble to stir one foot in search of it; and despising all those who do take pains in this inquiry, I am resolved to go on, without fear or foresight, and try the grand event; I will pass as easily as I can out of life, and die utterly uncertain about the eternal state of my future existence."

It is an honour to religion that it has such unreasonable men for its professed enemies; and their opposition is of so little importance to it, that, on the contrary, it serves to confirm the principal truths which it teaches. For the grand object of Christianity is to establish these two principles, the depravity of human nature, and redemption by Jesus Christ. Now these opposers, if they are of no use in demonstrating the truth of redemption, by the sanctity of their lives, are yet highly serviceable in shewing the corruption of nature by their unnatural sentiments.

Nothing is so important to any man as his own state; nothing so serious to him as eternity. If, therefore, we find persons indifferent to the loss of their being, and to the danger of everlasting misery, their temper is highly unnatural. They are quite different men in all other things; they fear

the smallest inconveniencies; they see them as they approach, and feel them when they arrive; and the same man who passes days and nights in rage and despair for the loss of a place, or for some imaginary affront to his honour, is the very same mortal who knows that he must soon lose every thing by death, and yet remains without disquiet, concern, or emotion. This strange insensibility with respect to things the most awful in their consequences, in a heart so acutely sensible to the meanest trifles, is a prodigy, an unintelligible enchantment, a supernatural infatuation.

A man confined in a dungeon, who does not know but the order for his execution is given, who has but a single hour to inform himself concerning it, and that one hour sufficient, in case it have passed, to obtain its revocation, would act contrary to nature, should he make use of this hour not to procure the necessary information, but to play and divert himself; yet such is the condition of the persons we are describing; only with this difference, that the evils with which they are threatened, are infinitely greater than the mere loss of life, and the transient punishment which the prisoner would have to fear. Yet they run thoughtlessly upon the precipice, casting a veil over their eyes, to keep themselves from discerning it, and making mock of those who warn them of their danger.

Thus not only the zeal of those who do seek God, demonstrates the truth of religion, but likewise the blindness of those who do not seek Him, and who pass their days in this horrible neglect. There must have been a strange revolution in the nature of man, to be able to live in such a state, much more to applaud and value himself upon it. For supposing it to be absolutely certain, that there is nothing but annihilation to fear after death, would not

this rather be a cause for dejection, than for pride? And is it not the highest pitch of extravagance, if we have no certainty of this to glory because we are in doubt?

And yet, after all, it is too evident that man has so far declined from his original nature, that there is in his heart a secret delight in all this. Nay, this brutal ease between the fear either of hell or of annihilation, carries somewhat so tempting in it, that not only do those who unhappily are sceptically inclined, make a boast of it, but even those who are not, think it something brave to pretend to be so. For experience shews us, that most of those who pretend to infidelity are of this latter kind, mere counterfeits and hypocrites in atheism. They are persons who have heard it said, that the genteel manners of the world consist in thus acting the bravo. This is what they term throwing off the yoke, and which the greater number of them profess to do merely in imitation of others.

But if they have the least portion of common sense, it will not be difficult to make them perceive, how miserably they deceive themselves, by seeking in this way for applause and esteem. For this is not the method to gain credit, even with worldly men, who are able to judge rightly on things, and who know that the only method of succeeding, is to appear honest, faithful, prudent, and capable of advancing the interest of our friends; for men naturally love nothing but that which some way contributes to their benefit. But what benefit can we derive from hearing a man confess that he has shaken off the yoke of religion; that he does not believe there is a God who watches over his actions; that he considers himself as absolute master of his own conduct, and accountable for it only to himself? Does he think we shall be induced from hence to repose a

greater degree of confidence in him; and to look to him for comfort, advice, and assistance, in the difficulties of life? Can he imagine we are greatly delighted when he tells us, that he doubts whether our souls be any thing better than a little wind or smoke; especially if he tells it us with an air of assurance and satisfaction? Is such a thing to be spoken of with pleasantry? or should it not rather be uttered with sadness, as the most melancholy reflection that can be mentioned?

If they would but think seriously on the subject, they must perceive this conduct to be so very ill chosen, so contrary to good manners, and so remote even from that gentility to which they pretend, that nothing can more effectually expose them to the contempt and aversion of mankind, or mark them out as persons defective in understanding and judgment. And, indeed, should we require of them an account of their sentiments, and of the reasons for which they call religion in question, what they have to offer would appear so weak and contemptible, that it would rather confirm us in our belief. This is what a person once told them with great propriety, "If you continue" (said he) "to talk at this rate, you will infallibly make me a Christian." And he was in the right: for who would not tremble to find himself entangled in the same opinions, with associates so truly contemptible?

Those therefore who only counterfeit these principles, are extremely unhappy in putting a constraint on their natural disposition, in order to render themselves the most impertinent of all mankind. If they are heartily and sincerely concerned at their want of information, let them not dissemble it. A confession of this can never be shameful; for there is really no shame but in being shameless. Nothing betrays so

much weakness of understanding, as not to perceive the misery of man without God. Nothing is a surer token of extreme baseness of spirit, than not to wish for the reality of eternal promises. No man is so truly a coward, as he that acts the brave against heaven. Let them therefore leave these impieties to those who are born with a judgment so unhappy, as to be capable of entertaining them in earnest. If they cannot be Christian men, let them be men of honour: and let them at least acknowledge, that there are but two sorts of persons who deserve to be accounted reasonable; either those who serve God with all their heart, because they know Him; or those who seek Him with all their heart, because as yet they know Him not.

To those persons then who sincerely enquire after God, and who, being sensible of their misery, truly desire to be rescued from it, it is just to contribute our labour and service, to assist them in finding out that light of which they feel the want.

But as for those who live without either knowing God, or endeavouring to know Him, they look on themselves as so little deserving their own care, that they cannot but be unworthy the care of others: and it requires all the charity of the religion they despise, not to despise them to such a degree, as to abandon them to their own folly. But since the same religion obliges us to consider them, while they remain in this life, as still capable of God's enlightening grace; and to believe it possible, that, in a very short time, they may be filled with a greater degree of faith than ourselves; and that we, on the other hand, may fall into their blindness; we ought to do for them, what we desire should be done to us in their case; to entreat them that they would take pity on themselves, and at least advance a step or two, and

try if they can discover the light. To this end let them employ, in the perusal of this work, a few of those hours which they spend so unprofitably in other pursuits. It is possible they may gain somewhat by the reading; at least they cannot be great losers. But if any shall apply themselves to it with perfect sincerity, and with an unfeigned desire of knowing the truth, I hope they will meet with satisfaction, and be convinced by those proofs of our divine religion, which they will here find collected together.

II.

THE CHARACTERS OF TRUE RELIGION.

True religion will always distinguish itself by obliging men to love God. This is what natural justice requires, and yet what no religion but the Christian has ever enjoined.

It ought likewise to know the concupiscence of man, and his utter insufficiency for the attainment of virtue by his own strength. It should likewise point out the proper remedies for this defect; of which prayer is the chief. Our religion has done all this, and no other has ever taught us to beg of God the power to love and obey Him.

To establish the truth of a religion, it is necessary that it should be acquainted with human nature. For our true nature and true happiness, true virtue and true religion, are things, the knowledge of which is inseparable. It should also be able to discern the greatness and the meanness of man; together with the reason of both. What religion, the Christian only excepted, has ever made all these known?

Other religions, as those of the heathens, are more popular, for they consist only in external appearance; but then they are not adapted to men of talents and understanding. A religion purely intellectual, might be fitter for men of genius, but would by no means be suited to the common ranks of mankind. Christianity alone is proportioned to all; for it consists both of that which is internal, and of that which is external. It raises the most ignorant to inward and spiritual acts, and brings down the most intelligent to outward performances, and is never complete but when it joins one of these effects to the other. For it is both necessary that the common people should understand the spirit of the letter, and that the learned should submit their spirit to the letter, by the performance of outward actions.

That we are in ourselves hateful, reason alone will convince us; and yet there is no religion but the Christian which teaches us to hate ourselves; wherefore no other religion can be entertained by those who know themselves to be worthy of nothing but hatred.

No religion, except the Christian, has understood that man is the most excellent of visible creatures, and, at the same time, the most miserable. Some, perceiving the reality of his excellence, have censured, as mean and ungrateful, the low opinion which men naturally entertain of themselves. Others, well knowing the unhappy effects of his baseness and misery, have treated with the greatest ridicule those sentiments of grandeur, which are no less natural to men.

Our religion alone has taught that man is born in sin: no sect of philosophers ever said this; therefore none of them ever declared the truth.

God being concealed from us, every religion which does not teach that He is so, is false; and every re-

ligion which does not shew the reason why He is so, must be barren and unedifying: our religion has done both.

That religion which consists in believing that man has fallen from a state of glory and communication with God, to a state of sorrow, humiliation, and estrangement from God; but that he should be at length restored by a Messiah who was to come; has always been in the world. All things have passed away; but this, for which all other things exist, has remained. For God, having designed to form to Himself a holy people, whom He would separate from all other nations, deliver from their enemies, and settle in a place of rest, was pleased expressly to promise, not only that He would do this, but that He would come Himself into the world for that purpose; and foretold, by His prophets, the very time and manner of His coming. In the meanwhile, to confirm the hope of His elect through all ages, He gave them continual types and figures, and never left them without assurances both of His power and His inclination to save them. For immediately after the creation of man, Adam was the witness of these, being made depositary of the promise concerning a Saviour to be born of the seed of the woman; and though men, so near the time of their first creation, could not have forgotten their creation, and their fall, or the promise which God had given them of a Redeemer; yet since they suffered themselves to be carried away into all sorts of corruptions and disorders, God was pleased to raise up holy men, as Enoch, Lamech, and others, who patiently waited for that Messiah who was promised from the commencement of the world. After this, when the wickedness of men was arrived at its highest pitch, God sent Noah, whom He saved, when all the rest of the world was drowned, by a miracle

which testified at once the power of God to save the world, and His determination to do so, by raising up to the woman the seed which He had promised. This miraculous interposition was sufficient to establish the hopes of mankind, and the memory of it was still fresh in their minds, when God renewed His promises to Abraham, who dwelt in the midst of idolaters, and revealed to him the mystery of the Messiah that was to come. In the days of Isaac and Jacob, iniquity had spread itself over the whole earth; yet these holy patriarchs lived in faith, and the latter of them, as he blessed his children when he was dying, cried out, with a degree of transport which interrupted his discourse, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

The Egyptians were polluted with idolatry and magic; and the people of God were led away by their example; yet Moses, with other excellent persons, saw Him who was invisible, and adored Him, looking forward to those eternal blessings which He was preparing for them.

The Greeks and Romans afterwards spread the worship of fictitious deities; the poets invented different systems of Theology; philosophers were divided into a thousand different sects; yet there were always in Judea men chosen to prophesy of the coming of the Messiah, who was unknown to every other nation.

At length, in the fulness of time, He came; and ever since His appearance, notwithstanding all the schisms and heresies which have arisen, all the kingdoms which have been destroyed, and the numerous changes which have taken place in all things, this same Church, that worships Him who has ever been adored, still subsists without interruption. And, what is astonishing, unparalleled, and altogether divine, this religion, which has always endured, has been always opposed. A

thousand times has it been, apparently, on the very brink of total destruction; and as often as it has been so, so often has it been rescued by some extraordinary interposition of Almighty Power. And it is still further astonishing, that it should always have been able to stand, without, in any degree, yielding to the will of its oppressors.

States must infallibly perish, if they did not often permit their laws to give way to necessity: but religion has never done this, and yet has stood its ground. But either such accommodations, or miracles, are indispensable. It is no wonder that governments should preserve themselves, by yielding to circumstances; and yet it is in some degree improper, to call this preserving themselves; and hence we see that they have all, at length, been utterly destroyed, nor has any one of them lasted so long as fifteen hundred years. But that this religion should have always continued unchanged and inflexible, this is truly divine.

Truth would be too much obscured, if it were destitute of visible appearances; of which this is a very wonderful one, that it should have been always perpetuated in a Church, or visible assembly. Its lustre, on the other hand, would be too great, if this Church were altogether undivided in opinion. But in order to find out which opinion is true, we have only to examine what has always been held by it; for it is certain that what is true has never ceased to have a place in it; while nothing that is false has been always maintained.

Thus has faith in the Messiah been perpetually maintained. The tradition concerning Him was handed down regularly from Adam to Noah and Moses. After these, the prophets predicted His coming; at the same time foretelling other things, which were from time to time fulfilled in the eyes of the world; and whi-

demonstrated the truth of their mission, and consequently of their promises concerning Him. They unanimously declared, that the law given to them was but preparatory to that of the Messiah; that, till He came it should subsist, but that the latter should endure for ever; and that by this means, either the law of Moses, or that of the Messiah, of which it was a promise, should always continue upon earth; and, in fact, it has always continued. Jesus Christ came under all the circumstances they had predicted. He wrought miracles, as did also His Apostles, who converted the gentile world: and the prophecies being thereby fulfilled, the Messiah is for ever demonstrated.

I see many contrary religions, all of which must be false but one. Each of them claims credit upon its own authority, and deals out its threatenings against all who disbelive it. I do not therefore take them at their word. For they can all do alike in this respect, just as every man can call himself a prophet. But, in Christianity, I see the accomplishment of prophecies, and an infinite number of miracles, attested beyond all reasonable doubt, and these I find in no other religion.

The only religion which is contrary to our nature in its present state, which opposes our pleasures, and which at first sight appears contrary to common sense, is that which has subsisted from the beginning.

The whole arrangement of things ought to turn on the establishment and grandeur of religion; men should feel within them sentiments agreeable to what it teaches; and, in a word, it ought to be so much the object and centre, to which all things tend, that whosoever understands the principles of it, may be enabled to give an account, both of human nature in particular, and of the whole state and order of the world in general.

It is upon this very foun-

dation that profane men take occasion to blaspheme the Christian religion—because they misunderstand it. They imagine, that it consists purely in the adoration of the Divinity, as a great, powerful, and eternal Being. This is properly Deism; and stands, almost, as far removed from Christianity as Atheism, which is directly opposite to it. Yet hence they infer the falsehood of this religion; because, say they, if it were true, God would have manifested Himself to mankind by such indisputable proofs, that it would have been impossible for any man to mistake them.

But let them conclude what they will against Deism; they will be able to draw no such conclusion against Christianity; which acknowledges that, since the fall, God does not manifest Himself to mankind with all the evidence that He could do. Christianity peculiarly consists in the mystery of a Redeemer; who by uniting in Himself the divine and human natures, has delivered men from the corruption of sin, to reconcile them to God in His divine Person.

It therefore instructs men in these two important truths, that there is a God whom they are capable of knowing and enjoying; and that there is that corruption in their nature, which renders them unworthy of this blessing. It is of equal importance, to know both the one and the other of these points. It is equally dangerous for man, to know God without the knowledge of his own misery; and to know his own misery without the knowledge of a Redeemer, who can deliver him from it. For one without the other begets either the pride of philosophers, who knew God, but not their own misery; or, the despair of Atheists, who know their own misery, but know nothing of a Redeemer.

And thus, as it is equally necessary to man to possess a knowledge of each of

these principles; so is it to be ascribed alone to the mercy of God, that He has been pleased to teach them to us. And this is the office of Christianity, and that in which its peculiar essence consists.

Let men examine the economy of the world on this principle; and they will see, whether all things do not tend to establish these two fundamental truths of our religion.

[There is this difference in the kings of the earth and the King of kings: princes do not make their subjects faithful, but find them so already; instead of which God never find men other than unfaithful, and it is He who causes them to be faithful when they are so; therefore unlike the kings of the earth, who are under great obligation to those who remain in subjection to them, those who live in the service of God are themselves actually and infinitely indebted to Him. Let us then continue to praise Him for the grace He has given us and for which we shall praise Him in eternity, and let us also implore an increase of it, and that He will vouchsafe His pity to us and to His Church, out of which there is no salvation.]

If any one knows not himself to be full of pride, ambition, concupiscence, weakness, misery, and unrighteousness, he is blind. And if, knowing this, he has no desire for deliverance, what can be thought of so irrational a man? How then can we do otherwise than esteem a religion which so well understands the defects of mankind? Or do otherwise than wish that religion may be true, which provides such suitable remedies against them?

It is impossible to take a view of all the proofs of Christianity together, without feeling their force; which is such, as no reasonable man can resist.

Consider its establishment. That a religion so

opposite to nature, should have established itself by means so gentle, on the one hand, as to use no force or constraint; and so powerful on the other, that no torments could deter its martyrs from confessing it: and not only was this effected without the assistance of any earthly prince, but in spite of all the princes who conspired to oppose it.

Consider the holiness, the dignity, and the humility, of a truly Christian soul. The heathen philosophers, sometimes, raised themselves above the rest of mankind, by a more regular mode of life, and by doctrines, in some degree, conformable to those of Christianity: but they never considered, what Christians call humility, as a virtue; they even thought it incompatible with the virtues they professed. Nothing but Christianity knew how to unite, what till then had appeared so inconsistent; or to teach men, that so far from humility being incompatible with other virtues, without it all other virtues are nothing more than vices and defects.

Consider the infinite wonders displayed in the holy Scriptures; the grandeur, and more than human sublimity of the things they contain, and the admirable simplicity of their style; in which there is nothing forced or affected, and which bears a stamp of truth that nothing can disprove.

Consider Jesus Christ Himself. Whatever opinion we entertain of Him, it is impossible to deny that He had a most elevated and superior mind, which He evinced at a very early age, before the doctors of the law; yet, instead of cultivating His talents by study and the society of the learned, He passed thirty years of his life in manual labour, and in entire obscurity; and during the three years of His public ministry He took into his company, and chose for His Apostles, men without sci-

ence, without study, without repute: while his enemies were men who passed for the most learned and wise of their time. A strange mode of proceeding for a man who intended to establish a new religion.

Consider, also, the persons who were chosen by Jesus Christ as His Apostles: men without learning or study, who found themselves at once made able to confute the most skilful philosophers; and strong enough to withstand all the monarchs and tyrants; who set themselves in opposition to the Christian religion which they preached.

Consider that miraculous succession of prophets; who followed one another for two thousand years, and who all foretold, in different ways, even the minutest circumstances relating to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the mission of His Apostles; the promulgation of the Gospel; the conversion of the Gentiles; and many other things concerning the establishment of Christianity; and the abolition of Judaism.

Consider the wonderful accomplishment of those prophecies which apply so exactly to the person of Jesus Christ, that it is impossible not to recognise Him without being wilfully blind.

Consider the state of the Jewish nation both before and since the coming of Jesus Christ; its flourishing state before His coming and its most miserable condition since their rejection of Him; for to this day they continue without any character of their religion; without a temple, without sacrifices, dispersed all over the earth, the scorn and derision of every nation.

Consider the perpetuity of Christianity: which has always subsisted from the beginning of the world, either among the saints under the Old Testament, who lived in expectation of Christ Jesus to come; or among those who have

received Him, and believed on Him, since He actually did come. No other religion has this mark of perpetuity, which is the principal character of the true.

Lastly, consider the holiness of this religion; its doctrines, which explain even the greatest contrarieties in man; and all the other uncommon, supernatural, and divine things, which beam forth from every part of it: and let any one judge, after all this, if it be possible to doubt, that Christianity is the only true religion, and if there ever was any other that could bear a comparison with it.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE RELIGION PROVED BY THE CONTRARIETIES WHICH ARE DISCOVERABLE IN MAN, AND BY ORIGINAL SIN.

The greatness and the misery of man are both so conspicuous, that the true religion must necessarily teach, that he contains in himself some noble principle of greatness, and, at the same time, some profound source of misery. For true religion will search our nature to the bottom, so as perfectly to understand all that is great, and all that is miserable in it, together with the reason both of one and the other. It must also account for those astonishing contrarieties which we find within us. If there be but one principle, or efficient cause of all things, and but one end of all things; true religion must teach us to make Him alone the object of our worship and love. But since we find ourselves unable to worship Him whom we

know not, and to love any thing but ourselves; the same religion, which enjoins these duties, must also acquaint us with this inability, and teach us how it is to be overcome.

Again, in order to render man happy, it ought to teach us that there is a God, whom we are under obligation to love; that our true felicity consists in being devoted to Him, and our only misery, in being separated from Him. It ought to shew us that we are full of darkness, which prevents us from knowing and loving Him; and that thus our duty obliging us to love God, and our concupiscence turning us from Him, we are full of unrighteousness. It ought to discover to us the cause of our opposition to God, and our own happiness; the remedies against it, and the means of obtaining them. Let men consider all the religions in the world, with regard to these points, and see whether any one, except Christianity, can give satisfaction concerning them.

Shall it be the doctrine of those philosophers, who set before us no other good than what we may find in ourselves? Is this the sovereign good? Have these men discovered the remedy of our evils? Is the proper cure, for man's presumption, to equal him with God? And those who have levelled us with the beasts and offer us earthly gratifications, as our only felicity, have they revealed the remedy for our lusts? 'Lift up your eyes to God,' say some; 'behold Him who has stamped you with His image, and has made you for His worship. You may make yourselves like Him; wisdom, if you follow her directions, will equal you to Him." While others cry out, "Cast down your eyes to the ground, base worms as you are, and look at the beasts, your companions."

What then is to be the fate of man! must he be equal to God, or to the beasts? How frightful a

disparity is this! What then are we to be? What religion shall instruct us at once to correct our pride and our concupiscence? What religion shall disclose to us our happiness, and our duty; the infirmities which lead us from them, the cure for those infirmities, and the means of obtaining it? Let us hear the answer of the wisdom of God, as it speaks to us in the Christian religion.

It is in vain, O men! to seek from yourselves the remedy for your miseries. All your knowledge can reach no further than this—that you can neither find happiness nor truth in yourselves. Philosophers have promised them to you, but they promised what they could not perform. They knew neither your real condition, nor your real good. How could they point out the remedy for your diseases, who did not even know what they were? Your greatest evils are pride, which alienates you from God; and concupiscence, which attaches you to earth; and all they did was to cherish either one or the other. If they likened you to God, it was only to gratify your pride, by making you think that your nature resembled the divine: and as for those who saw the extravagance of such pretensions, they only led you to a contrary precipice; by tempting you to believe that your nature was like that of the beasts, that you might be led to place all your happiness in the sensual delights of irrational creatures! This was not the way to convince you of your transgressions. Do not therefore expect truth or consolation from men: I am He that has formed you, and alone can teach you what you are. You are not now in the state in which I created you. I made man holy, innocent, and perfect: I filled him with light and understanding: I made known to him My wonders and My glory. The eye of man then saw

the majesty of God. He was not in this darkness which blinds him, or under this mortality, and these miseries, which distress him. But he could not enjoy that glory long without falling into presumption: he wanted to make himself the centre of his happiness, independent of My aid. He withdrew himself from My dominion, and as he pretended to an equality with Me, from a desire to find his happiness in himself, I abandoned him to himself; and causing the creatures that were his subjects to revolt against him, I made them his enemies. Man is therefore now become like unto the beasts, and removed so far from Me, that he scarcely retains any feeble glimmer of the Author of his being, so much has all his knowledge been either lost or confused. His senses now, being not the servants, but often the masters of his reason, have led him away in the pursuit of pleasure: all the creatures with which he is surrounded, either tempt or afflict him, and exercise a kind of sovereignty over him; either subduing him by their strength, or seducing him by their charms, which is the most imperious and fatal dominion of the two.

Such is the present state and condition of men! Still a feeble instinct remains of the felicity of their primitive nature; while they are plunged in the miseries of their own blindness and lust, which is now their second nature.

From the principles which I have here laid open, we may discern the cause of all those contrarieties, which have astonished and divided mankind.

Observe all those emotions of greatness and glory, which the sense of so many miseries is not able to extinguish; and consider, whether they can proceed from a less powerful cause than original nature.

Know then, proud mortal, what a paradox thou art to thyself! Let thy

weak reason be humbled; let thy frail nature be silent. Know that man infinitely surpasseth man; and learn from thy Master thy real condition, to which thou art thyself a stranger.

For, in a word, had man never fallen into corruption, he would have continued stedfast in the enjoyment of truth and happiness; and had he never been any other than corrupt, he would have possessed no idea either of truth or happiness. But so great is our misery, (greater than if there had never been any thing noble in our condition,) that we retain an idea of happiness, though we are unable to attain it; we feel some faint notion of truth, while we possess nothing but falsehood; incapable both of absolute ignorance, and of certain knowledge. So manifest is it, that we have once been in a state of perfection, from which we are now unhappily fallen.

What then does this avidity on the one hand, and this impotence on the other, teach us, but that man was originally possessed of a real bliss, of which nothing now remains but the footsteps and empty traces, which he vainly endeavours to fill up with that which surrounds him; seeking in things absent, the relief which he does not obtain from such as are present, and which neither the present nor the absent can bestow upon him; because this infinite gulph is only to be filled by an infinite and immutable object?

It is nevertheless astonishing that, of all mysteries, that which seems to be furthest from our apprehension, I mean the transmission of original sin, should yet be that, without which we must remain utter strangers to ourselves. For undoubtedly nothing appears more offensive to our reason, than to hear that the transgression of the first man attaches guilt on those who being so vastly distant from its fountain, seem incapable of being involved

in it. This communication is looked upon by us, not only as impossible, but even as very unjust. For what can be more repugnant to our miserable rules of justice, than eternally to condemn an infant who is incapable of exercising his will, for an offence in which he appears to have had so little a part, that it was committed six thousand years before he was in existence? Certainly nothing seems to us more harsh than such a doctrine. And, yet, without admitting this incomprehensible mystery, we are utterly incomprehensible to ourselves. The knot of our present condition has all its turns interwoven in this abyss: insomuch, that man is more incomprehensible without this mystery, than the mystery itself is incomprehensible to man.

Original sin is foolishness to men. We allow it to be so. We ought not therefore to reproach reason for not having this knowledge; because it is not pretended that reason can fathom it. But this foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of men; (the foolishness of God is wiser than man, 1 Cor. i. 25;) for, without this, what could we say of man? His whole state depends on this imperceptible point. Yet how should he be acquainted with this by his reason, when it is a thing above his reason; and when reason, instead of discovering it to him at first, disinclines him to believe it when it is presented before him?

These two opposite states of innocence and corruption, being once laid open before us, it is impossible we should not recognise them.

Let us trace our own emotions, and observe ourselves; and let us see, whether we do not discover the lively characters of these different natures.

How surprising it is, that so many contradictions should be found in one and the same subject!

This two-fold nature of man is so visible, that some have imagined him to have

two souls: one single subject appearing to them incapable of such great and sudden transitions, from unmeasurable presumption to the most dreadful abjectness of spirit.

Thus the several contrarieties which would seem most calculated to alienate men from the knowledge of any religion, are those very things which would rather conduct them to the true.

As to myself, I confess, that as soon as ever the Christian religion has revealed to me this one principle, that human nature is depraved, and fallen from God, this opens my eyes to see every where the proofs of that fact. For nature is now in that state, that every thing, both in us and out of us, bespeaks our loss of God.

Without this divine information, what could men have done, but either become vain from the remaining sense of their former grandeur, or dejected by the consciousness of their present infirmity? For, not discerning the whole truth, it was impossible for them to arrive at perfect virtue: some looking upon nature as uncorrupt, and others, as irrecoverable, they could not but fall into vanity or sloth, the two great sources of every vice. They could only, either give themselves up to vice, through meanness of spirit, or escape from it, through pride. For those who knew the excellency of man, were unacquainted with his corruption; so that while they escaped, perhaps, from indolence, they were lost in conceit: and those who were sensible of the infirmity of nature, were strangers to its dignity; so that while they were delivered from vanity, they plunged themselves into despair.

Hence arose the various sects of the Stoics and Epicureans, the Dogmatists, Academics, &c. The Christian religion alone has been able thoroughly to cure these opposite vices; not driving out one by means of the other, according to

the wisdom of this world; but expelling them both by the simplicity of the Gospel. For while it exalts the righteous, even to a participation of the divinity, it makes them understand, that, in this superior state, they have still within them the fountain of all corruption, which renders them, their whole life long, subject to error, to misery, to death, and to sin; and it assures the most impious, that they still may partake of the grace of their Redeemer. Thus awing those whom it justifies, and comforting those whom it condemns, it so wisely tempers hope with fear, by this two-fold capability both of sin and of grace, which is common to all mankind, that it abases us infinitely more than unassisted reason could do, and yet without driving us to despair; while it exalts us infinitely more than the pride of our nature can do, and yet without rendering us vain; thereby demonstrating, that being alone exempt from error and vice, it belongs only to itself to instruct men, and at the same time to reform them.

We have no idea either of the glorious state of Adam, or of the nature of his transgression, or of the mode in which it is transmitted to us. These are things which took place in a state of nature very different to ours: they transcend our present capacity, and the knowledge of them would be of no use to deliver us from our miseries. All that is of importance for us to know, is this, that through Adam we are miserable, depraved, and at a distance from God; but that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ; and of this we have astonishing proofs in this world.

Christianity is most surprising. It obliges man to acknowledge that he is vile, and even abominable, and yet enjoins him to aspire after a resemblance of God. Were not things thus set against one another, this exaltation would render

him extravagantly vain, or such a debasement would render him horribly abject: for misery leads to despair, and a sense of dignity inclines to presumption.

The incarnation discovers to man the greatness of his misery, by the greatness of the remedy that was needed for his relief.

In the Christian religion we find neither a state of abasement that renders us incapable of good, nor a state of holiness that exempts us from evil.

No doctrine can be more suited to man, than this, which makes him acquainted with his two-fold capacity of receiving and falling from grace, on account of the two-fold danger to which he is always exposed, either of despair on the one hand, or of pride on the other.

Philosophers never inspired men with sentiments proportioned to both these conditions. They either inculcated notions of unqualified dignity, which is not the true condition of man; or else of unqualified meanness, which is as little so as the former. We ought to feel a sense of our meanness, not as a character of our original nature, but the effect of repentance; not such as should lead us to continue in that meanness, but such as should make us aspire to greatness. We ought also to have a sense of our dignity, but of that which proceeds from grace, and not from merit, and which begins by humiliation.

No man is so happy as a real Christian; none so rational, so virtuous, so amiable. How little vanity does he feel when he believes himself united to God! How far is he from abjectness when he ranks himself with the worms of the earth!

Who then can refuse to believe or adore this heavenly light? For is it not clearer than the day, that we see and feel within ourselves indelible characters of excellence? And is it not equally true that we experience every hour

effects of our present deplorable condition? What else, therefore, does this chaos, this monstrous confusion in our nature proclaim, but the truth of this double state, and that with a voice so powerful, that it cannot be gainsaid.

CHAPTER IV.

IT IS NOT INCREDIBLE THAT GOD SHOULD UNITE HIMSELF TO US.

THAT which renders men so reluctant to believe themselves capable of being united to God, is nothing else than a consciousness of their own degradation: yet, if this be sincere, let them pursue it as far as I have done; and let them confess that our baseness is in reality such, as makes us unable, of ourselves, to discover whether His mercy can render us capable of an union with Him or not. For I would gladly be informed, whence this creature, that acknowledges itself so weak, has obtained a right to limit the mercy of God, and to set such bounds to it as his fancy may suggest. Man knows so little of the divine essence, that he does not even know what he himself is; and yet, all confused as he is at the prospect of his own condition, he takes upon him to say that God cannot render him capable of communication with Himself. But I would ask, whether God requires any thing of him except that he should know Him, and love Him; and why it is he believes God cannot make Himself to be both known and loved by him, seeing he is naturally capable both of knowledge and love. For no man can know otherwise than that he exists, and that there is something he loves. If,

then he sees any thing in his present state of darkness; and finds something on earth which engages his affection; why, if God should be pleased to impart some rays of His essence, should he be incapable of knowing and loving his divine Benefactor, according as He shall be pleased to reveal Himself to him? There is, therefore, without doubt, an intolerable presumption in such reasonings as these, though founded on an apparent humility. But our humility can neither be rational, nor sincere, unless it makes us confess, that not knowing of ourselves what we are, we cannot learn it of any but God

CHAPTER V.

THE PROPER SUBMISSION AND USE OF REASON.

The furthest stretch of reason is, to know that there is an infinite number of things which utterly surpass it; and it must be very feeble indeed, if it reach not so far as to know this.

It is fit we should know how to doubt where we ought; to be confident where we ought; and to submit where we ought. He who is deficient in these respects, does not yet understand the powers of reason. Yet there are men who err against each of these principles: either, considering every thing as demonstrative, because they are unacquainted with the nature of demonstration; or, doubting of every thing, because they know not where they ought to submit; or submitting to every thing, because they know not where they ought to judge.

If we bring down all things to reason, our religion will have nothing in it mysterious or supernatural. If we violate the

principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

Reason, says St. Austin, would never submit, if it did not judge that, on some occasions, submission is its duty. It is but just therefore, that it should submit where it sees it ought to submit; and that it should not submit, where it judges upon good grounds it ought not to do it; but great care must be taken that we do not deceive ourselves.

Piety is different from superstition. To carry our piety to superstition is to destroy it. Heretical men reproach us with superstitious submission; and we should be guilty of the charge, if we required men to submit in things which are not the proper matters for submission.

Nothing is so agreeable to reason, as disclaiming of reason in matters of faith: and nothing is so repugnant to reason, as the disuse of reason in things that are not matters of faith: the extremes are equally dangerous, whether we wholly exclude reason, or admit nothing but reason.

Faith says many things, concerning which the senses are silent; but nothing, which the senses deny: it is always above them, but never contrary to them.

[When our passions govern us and our inclinations lead us to do any thing we forget our duty; for instance, we like a book, we read it, even when we ought to be doing something else. But if we want to remember our duty let us propose to ourselves something we dislike; we excuse ourselves from it on the score that we have something else to do, and thus are we reminded of our duty.]

CHAPTER VI.

FAITH WITHOUT REASONING.

If I had but seen a miracle, say some men, I should be converted? They would not talk in this manner, if they knew what conversion really meant. They imagine, there is nothing in it but merely to acknowledge there is a God; and that to worship Him consists only in uttering certain verbal addresses, but little different from those which the heathens made to their idols. True conversion consists in deep abasement of ourselves, before that sovereign Being whom we have so often provoked, and who every moment might justly destroy us; in acknowledging that we can do nothing without His aid, and that we have merited nothing of Him but His displeasure. It consists in knowing that there is such an invincible opposition between God and ourselves, that without a Mediator, there could not be any communion between us.

Think it not strange, that illiterate persons should believe without reasoning. God gives them the love of His righteousness, and an hatred of themselves. He inclines their hearts to believe. No man ever believes with a true and saving faith, unless God inclines his heart: and no man, when God does incline his heart, can refrain from believing. This David well knew when he prayed, "Incline my heart, O God, unto Thy testimonies." Ps. cxix. 36.

If some men believe without having examined the proofs of religion, it is because there is produced in them a disposition truly holy; and because what they hear affirmed of our religion is perfectly agreeable to that disposition. They are sensible that God

is their Maker; they are resolved to love none but Him, and to hate none but themselves; they feel that they are without strength, that they are incapable of going to God, and that, unless He is pleased to come to them, they cannot have any communion with Him; and they hear our religion declare, that we are to love God alone, and hate only ourselves; and that, whereas we are altogether corrupt, and incapable of coming to God, God became man, that He might unite Himself to us. There needs no more than this to convince men who possess such a disposition of heart, and such knowledge of their duty and of their own incapacity to perform it.

Those whom we see become Christians, without the knowledge of prophecies, or other such evidences, form as sound a judgment of their religion as those who have that knowledge. They judge of it by the heart, as others judge by the understanding. God Himself inclines them to believe, and by this means they are most effectually persuaded.

I confess, that a Christian who believes without argumentative proof, is not always qualified to convince an infidel, who has a great deal to say for himself. But those who are acquainted with the proofs of religion, can easily demonstrate, that such a believer does truly receive his faith from the inspiration of God, though he may not be able to prove it himself.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT THERE IS MORE ADVANTAGE IN BELIEVING, THAN IN DISBELIEVING THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

UNITY, added to infinity, does not increase it, any more than a foot-measure increases an infinite space.

What is finite, vanishes before that which is infinite, and becomes nothing. Thus does our understanding before God; and our righteousness before His righteousness.

There is not so great a disproportion between unity and infinity, as there is between man's righteousness and the righteousness of God.

We know that there is an infinite; but we are ignorant of its nature. For instance, we know that numbers cannot be finite; there must, therefore, be an infinity in number. But we know not what it is. It can neither be equal nor unequal, because adding unity to it, cannot change its nature in the least. So we may certainly know there is a God, without comprehending what He is; and you ought by no means to conclude there is no God, because you cannot perfectly comprehend His nature.

To convince you of His existence, I shall not avail myself of faith, by which we most certainly know it; nor of some other proofs of which we are in possession, because you will not receive them. I shall argue with you only upon your own principles; and I take upon me to shew, from the manner in which you reason every day concerning things of the smallest importance, how you ought to reason respecting this; and which side you ought to take, in the decision of this important question, concerning the existence of God. You say then, that we are incapable of knowing whether there is a God. Now it is certain, that either there is a God, or there is not; there can be no medium. Which part then shall we choose? Reason, you will say, is not able to determine. There is an infinite chaos between us. We play, as it were, for cross or pile, at an infinite distance. For which will you wager? By reason you can assure yourself neither of one nor the other. By reason you can dis-

prove neither one nor the other.

Do not then accuse those of duplicity who have already made their choice. For you cannot know that they are wrong, and have made a bad one. No, you will say, but I blame them not for making this choice, but for making any: he that takes cross, and he that takes pile, are both in the wrong; the right had been not to wager at all.

Nay, but there is a necessity to wager; the thing is placed beyond your will; you are actually embarked in it, and by not laying that God is, you in effect lay that He is not. Which side then will you take? Let us balance the gain and the loss of taking the affirmative. If you gain, you gain every thing; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, therefore, that He is, without delay.—Well I must lay—but perhaps I shall stake too much? Let us see: supposing the chance to be equal, and that you had two lives to gain, and but one to lose, you might safely lay then. And in case there were ten to win, you would certainly be imprudent not to hazard one life for ten, at a game where the chances were even. But here is an infinite number of lives of infinite happiness, to be won on an equal risk; and the stake you venture is so petty a thing, and of so short a duration, that it is ridiculous to hesitate on the occasion.

It avails nothing to say it is uncertain that you shall win, and that your risk is certain; and that the infinite distance between the certainty of what you venture, and the uncertainty of what you may win, makes the finite good which you expose, equal to the infinite, which is uncertain: for this is not true. Every gamester stakes what is certain against what is uncertain; and yet, by venturing a finite certainty for a finite uncertainty, he does not act contrary to reason. There is not an infinite dis-

tance between the certainty of what we venture, and the uncertainty of the prize to be gained. There is, indeed, an infinite distance between the certainty of winning, and the certainty of losing. But the uncertainty of winning is proportioned to the certainty of what we venture, according to the proportion of the chances of winning or losing: hence, if there be as many chances on one side as on the other, the game is even; and then the certainty of what we venture is equal to the uncertainty of the prize; so far are they from being infinitely distant; so that the argument is of infinite force, if what we stake be finite, where the chances of winning and losing are equal, and that which may be won is infinite. We have here a demonstration, and if men are capable of comprehending any truth whatever, they cannot but feel the force of this.

I own and confess it; but are there not some means of seeing a little clearer into this matter? Certainly, through the medium of Scripture, and of the other proofs of religion, which are numberless.

Men, you will say, who have the hope of salvation are so far happy; but the fear of hell is a counterpoise to their happiness.

But which, I beseech you, has most cause to be afraid of hell; he that is ignorant whether there is a hell or not, and is certain of damnation if there be; or he who is certainly persuaded there is a hell, but possesses the hope of deliverance from it.

If a man who had but eight days to live, should not think it wisest to consider that as somewhat more than a mere matter of chance, he must have utterly lost his understanding. And were we not enslaved by our passions, eight days and a hundred years would, in this calculation, appear the same thing.

What harm then are you likely to sustain by taking

this part. You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, beneficent, upright, and sincere. It is true, you will not live in poisoned pleasure, in earthly glory, in sensual delights: but will you not have others more desirable? I tell you, you will gain, even in this life: and that at every step you take in this path, you will discover so much certainty of advantage, and so much nullity in what you hazard, that at length you will find you have betted for a sure and infinite profit, and have in effect risked nothing to obtain it.

You say, you are so made as to be incapable of believing: at least then be persuaded of your incapacity, since although reason invites you to it, still you cannot believe. Labour then to be convinced, not by augmenting the proofs of a Deity, but by diminishing the power of your passions. You would arrive at faith, but you know not the way: you would be cured of your infidelity, and you ask what are its remedies: learn them from those who were once in your condition, but are at present without any doubt. They know the path which you would find: they have recovered from the disease of which you wish to be healed. Pursue the method with which they began: imitate their external actions, if you cannot, as yet, participate their inward dispositions: quit those vain amusements which have hitherto entirely employed you.

I should soon have quitted these pleasures, say you, if I had but had faith. And I say, on the other hand, you would soon have had faith, if you had quitted your pleasures. It is your part to begin. I would give you faith if I could; I am unable to do this, and, consequently, to put the truth of what you say to the test: but you may easily abandon your pleasures; and put the truth of what I say to the test.

We must not forget our

own nature; we are body as well as spirit; and hence it comes to pass, that the instrument by which conviction is produced, is not demonstration only. How few things are there demonstrated! Demonstrations act only on the mind; but custom produces our strongest convictions: it engages the senses, and they incline the understanding, without even giving it time for thought. Who has ever demonstrated the certainty of to-morrow's light, or of our own death? And yet what is more universally believed? Custom, therefore, persuades us of it. Custom makes so many men pagans and Turks; and so many artisans, soldiers, &c. It is true that we ought not to begin with custom in our enquiries after truth; but we must have recourse to it, when once we have discovered where truth is, in order to refresh and invigorate our belief, which every passing hour inclines us to forget; for a regular train of arguments cannot always be present to our minds. We want something more easy, a habit of believing, which, without violence, or art, or argument, compels our assent, and so inclines all our powers toward it, that we naturally fall into it. It will not be sufficient that we are willing to believe any thing upon the force of conviction, when our senses are soliciting us to believe directly the contrary. The two parts of ourselves must always proceed in concert; the understanding by those arguments which it is sufficient once in our lives to have understood; the senses by habit, and by not suffering them to take a contrary bias.

CHAPTER VIII.

DESCRIPTION OF A MAN WHO HAS WEARIED HIMSELF WITH SEARCHING AFTER GOD BY REASONING ALONE, AND WHO IS NOW BEGINNING TO READ THE SCRIPTURES.

When I consider the blindness and misery of man, and those amazing contrarieties which discover themselves in his nature; when I observe the whole creation to be silent, and man left in darkness, abandoned to himself, and as it were, wandering in this corner of the universe, neither knowing who placed him there, nor what he came to do, nor what will become of him when he dies; I am struck with the same horror, as a man who has been carried in his sleep into some desolate and frightful island, and who awakes without knowing where he is, or how he can make his escape. And, upon this view, I am astonished that so miserable a state is not productive of despair. I see other persons near me, of the same nature with myself: I ask them if they are any better informed than I am; they tell me they are not; I then observe, that these miserable wanderers, having looked round, and espied certain objects that please them, have given themselves up to them, and are careless about every thing else. For my own part, I could not continue, nor be at rest in the society of persons like myself, miserable like me, impotent like me. I see they will be able to give me no assistance at my death: I shall die alone; and, therefore, I must act as if I were alone. Now if I were alone, I should not build houses, I should not perplex myself with the tumult of affairs; I would court the esteem

of no one; but would devote myself entirely to the discovery of truth.

Hence reflecting how probable it seems, that there is something besides what I now see; I enquire, whether that God of whom all the world speaks, has left any marks of Himself. I look round on all sides, and see nothing but obscurity. Nature exhibits nothing but matter of doubt and disquiet. If I could nowhere discern any mark of divinity, I would resolve not to believe at all: if I could in every thing see the stamp of a Creator, I would rest in settled belief. But while I see too much to deny, and too little to make me certain, my condition renders me an object of pity; and I have a hundred times wished, that if there be a God who is the supporter of nature, she would shew Him without ambiguity; and that if the characters she exhibits are fallacious, she would conceal them altogether. Let her either say all or nothing, that I may know which part I should take. Whereas, in my present situation, ignorant of what I am, and of what I ought to do, I know neither my condition nor my duty. My heart is wholly bent on knowing where the chief good is, in order that I may pursue it, nor should I think any thing too dear to obtain it.

I observe a multitude of religions in all countries and times; but they are such as can neither please me with their morals, nor satisfy me with their proofs; so that I would at once reject the religion of Mahomet, of the Chinese, of ancient Rome, or of Egypt, for this single reason, that as no one of them can produce more marks of truth than another, and neither of them contains any thing decisive, reason cannot incline me to one of them more than to either of the rest.

But while I am reflecting on this strange and unaccountable variety in the manners and creeds of dif-

ferent periods, I find in one little corner of the world a peculiar people, separated from all the other nations of the earth, whose registers exceed, by many ages, the most ancient histories that we possess. I discover this great and numerous people who worship but one God, and are governed by a law which they affirm themselves to have received from His hand. They maintain that they are the only persons in the world to whom God has made a revelation of His mysteries; that all men are corrupt, and under the divine displeasure; that they are all abandoned to their own senses and imaginations, from whence proceed their endless wanderings, and continual changes in their customs and religion, while their nation, alone, has continued unalterable in both. But, that God will not for ever leave the rest of the nations in this darkness; that there shall come a Saviour for them all; that they are established in the world to announce His arrival; that they were formed on purpose to be the heralds of this glorious event, and to call upon all nations to unite with them in the expectation of this Redeemer.

On meeting with this people, I am surprised, and they seem to me deserving the closest attention, on account of the many wonderful and singular things discoverable in them.

They are a people composed entirely of brethren: and whereas all others have been constituted by an assemblage of an almost infinite number of families, these, though so prodigiously fruitful, have all descended from one man; and thus being as it were one flesh, and members one of another, they compose a formidable power from one single family. This is unparalleled.

They are the most ancient people that mankind have any knowledge of; a circumstance which, in my opinion, entitles them to very particular veneration,

especially in regard to our present enquiry; because, if God has, in all ages, vouchsafed to reveal Himself to mankind, these are the persons to whom we must have recourse in order to know that revelation.

Nor are they considerable only in point of antiquity, they are no less singular in their duration, having always subsisted from their origin to this day. For while the several people of Greece, Italy, Sparta, Athens, Rome, and others which sprung up long after them, have been many ages extinct, these have always subsisted; and, in spite of the contrivances of many great and powerful princes, who have a hundred times attempted their destruction, (as history testifies, and as it is natural to infer from the ordinary revolutions of things during so long a course of years,) they have always been preserved, and extending from the earliest to the latest times, their annals comprise a period equal in length to all the rest of our histories together.

The law by which this people is governed is in all respects the most ancient and most perfect in the world, and the only one which has always been preserved without interruption in a state. This Philo, the Jew, has demonstrated in several places, and Josephus, most admirably, in his discourse against Appion, where he shews it to be so high in respect of antiquity, that the very name of a law was not known in the most ancient nations for more than a thousand years after; insomuch that Homer, though he has spoken of so many different nations, has not once used the word. And we may easily judge of the perfection of this law, from merely reading it, by which we shall discern it to have provided for every thing with so much wisdom, justice, and equity, that the most ancient legislators of Greece and Rome have borrowed their principal insti-

tutions from thence, as is evident from the laws of the twelve tables, and by other proofs which Josephus has produced.

Yet this law is, at the same time, severe and rigorous beyond all others, obliging the people, in order to retain them in their duty, to a thousand peculiar and painful observances, under penalty of death; so that it is a most astonishing thing that it should have been preserved for so many ages amongst a rebellious and impatient people, as we know the Jews to have been; while all other states have changed their laws from time to time, though such, on the contrary, as were easily observed.

This same people are also to be admired for their sincerity: they preserve, with fidelity and affection, the very book in which Moses declares them to have been always ungrateful towards God, and that he foresaw they would be still more so after his death; in which he therefore calls heaven and earth to witness against them, as to the sufficiency of the warning which he had given them; and finally declares that God, being incensed against them, should scatter them through all the nations of the earth; and that as they had provoked Him to jealousy by serving gods which were no gods, He also should provoke them, by calling a people which were not His people. Nevertheless, this book which condemns them in so many ways, they preserve at the expense of their lives. Such sincerity as this is without example in the world, and does not spring from the nature of man.

To conclude: I find no reason to suspect the authority of the book which contains all these particulars: for there is a very great difference between a book composed by an individual, and dispersed amongst a people, and a book which the people themselves have compiled. In this case the antiquity of the book and

of the people is undoubtedly the same.

These writings, moreover, were composed by authors contemporary to the facts which they record. All histories compiled by persons of a period different from that of the actions they describe, are suspicious; as the books of the Sybils, of Hermes Trismegistus, and many others, which gained credit in the world, and have since been detected as forgeries. But this is not the case with contemporary authors.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND DEPRAVITY OF MAN.

MAN is evidently made for thinking: this is the whole of his dignity, and the whole of his merit. To think as he ought is the whole of his duty; and the true order of thinking, is to begin with himself, his author, and his end. And yet what is it that is thought of in the world? Not one of these objects; but how to take pleasure, how to grow rich, how to gain reputation, how to make ourselves kings; without ever reflecting what it is to be a king, or even to be a man.

Human thought is a thing wonderful in its nature. It must have prodigious defects to become contemptible, and yet it has such that nothing can be more ridiculous. How great is it by its nature! how despicable by its defects!

If there be a God, it is our duty to love Him, and not creatures. The reasoning of the wicked, described in the book of Wisdom, (chap. ii.,) is founded on the persuasion that there is no God. And this being taken for granted, now say they, we will have our fill of the creatures. But if they had known that there really is a God, they would have concluded directly the

contrary. And this is the conclusion of the wise—There is a God; let us not, therefore, seek happiness in creatures. Every thing which incites us to confine ourselves to creatures is evil, because it either hinders us from serving God, if we already know Him, or from seeking Him, if we know Him not. We are full of concupiscence; therefore we are full of evil; and if so, we ought to detest ourselves, and all that attaches us to any thing else but to God alone.

When we endeavour to think of God, how many things do we feel diverting us from Him, and tempting us to think of somewhat else? All this is evil, and evil that we bring with us into the world.

It is not true that we deserve that others should love us; nor is it just that we should so eagerly covet it. If we were born thoroughly reasonable, and with any proper knowledge of ourselves, we should not entertain such a desire. And yet this attends us from our birth. We are therefore unrighteous from our birth; for every man's object is himself. This is contrary to order. Our object should be the general good; and this bias towards ourselves, is the first spring of all disorder, in war, in government, and in domestic affairs.

If the members of all communities, both natural and civil, should each seek the good of their respective bodies; so every community ought to aim at the welfare of the general body, of which it is only a part.

Whosoever does not detest in his own heart, that self-love, that instinct which prompts him to set himself above every thing else, is most wretchedly blind; for nothing is more opposite to justice and truth. For we do not deserve such a preference, and it is unjust and impossible to obtain it, because all seek the very same thing. It is therefore a manifest injustice, in which we are born, which

we cannot shake off, and yet ought to get rid of.

Nevertheless, no religion but the Christian has informed us that this is a sin, or that we are born under its power, or that we are bound to strive against it; nor has any one thought of a method for its cure.

There is an internal war in man, between his reason and his passions. He might enjoy some sort of repose, if he had reason without passions, or passions without reason. But, since he is actuated by both, he lives in continual disquiet, and can never be at peace with the one, without being at war with the other. Hence he is always divided, and always at variance with himself.

[There are two kinds of fear; there is that ungodly fear which emanates not from a belief in God, but from a doubt whether there is a God or not. A godly fear is the effect of faith; the other proceeds from doubt: godly fear is united to hope, because it springs from faith, we hope from the God we believe in: ungodly fear is allied to despair, because we fear that God in whom we do not believe. Some dread losing Him, others fear to find Him.]

If it be an unnatural degree of blindness to live utterly unconcerned about what we are, it is a far more terrible thing to live wickedly, when we believe there is a God; and yet the greater part of mankind are under one or other of these infatuations.

CHAPTER X.

THE JEWS.

God having determined to make it appear that He was able to form a people, spiritually holy, and to fill them with eternal glory, represented in the economy of

nature, what He intended to accomplish in that of grace, that men might conclude He could produce that which is invisible, from their observation of that which is visible.

He therefore saved His people from the deluge, in the person of Noah: He caused them to spring from Abraham: He redeemed them from their enemies, and brought them into the rest which He had promised them.

The design of God was not to save them from the deluge, and to produce a whole nation from Abraham, merely for the sake of conducting them into a land of plenty. But as nature is an image of grace, so these visible miracles were symbols of the invisible, which He intended to perform.

Another reason for which He formed the Jewish people was, that as He intended to abridge His servants of carnal and perishable enjoyments, He determined to convince, by such a series of miracles, that it was not for want of power to bestow them.

This people were immersed in these earthly conceits—that God loved their father Abraham, his person, and all who descended from him: that, for this reason, He had multiplied them and distinguished them from all other people, not even suffering them to mix with other nations; had delivered them out of Egypt, with all those wonderful signs which He performed in their favour; had fed them with manna in the wilderness: had brought them into a fruitful and happy country; had given them kings, and a magnificent temple, for the offering up of beasts and the purification of themselves by their blood, and that He would at length send them the Messiah, who was to render them masters of the whole world.

The Jews were accustomed to great and splendid miracles; and, hence, looking on those performed at the Red sea, and in the

land of Canaan, as only an abridgment of the mighty things their Messiah was to effect, they expected from him actions still more illustrious, of which all that Moses had done was only a pattern.

When they were now grown old in these carnal errors, Jesus Christ actually came at the time foretold, but not with that outward splendour they expected: and hence they did not believe it was Him. After His death St. Paul was sent to instruct men, that all these things happened in figure; that the kingdom of God was not in the flesh, but in the spirit; that the enemies of men were not the Babylonians, but their own passions; that God delighted not in a temple made with hands, but in a pure and humble mind; that bodily circumcision was unprofitable, and that of the heart indispensable, &c.

God not having thought fit to disclose these things to so unworthy a people, and nevertheless having designed to foretel them, in order that they might be believed, predicted clearly the time of their accomplishment, and sometimes declared them plainly, but generally under figures, to fix the attention of those who loved figurative representations; and yet so that those who loved the things figured, might be able to discern them. Hence the people were divided at the time of the Messiah: those who were spiritual received Him; and those who were carnal, and rejected Him, remain to this day as witnesses for Him.

The carnal Jews understood neither the greatness, nor the humiliation of the Messiah, which were foretold by the prophets. They mistook His true greatness, when they were assured that He should be David's Lord, although He was his Son; that He was before Abraham, and had seen him. They did not conceive He was so great, as to have existed from all eternity. And they no less

mistook Him in His humiliation and death. "The Messiah (say they) abideth for ever, and this Man declares that He should die." Therefore they neither believed Him to be mortal, nor eternal: they looked to the Messiah for nothing but worldly aggrandizement.

They were so fond of the figures, and so literally expected them, that they mistook the substance when it came at the time and in the manner that had been foretold.

Men indisposed to believing, are wont to shelter themselves under the unbelief of the Jews. If all this, say they, was so clear, why did not the Jews believe in Him? Whereas, their rejection of Him is a ground for our faith. If they had believed, we should be less disposed to believe. We should then have a more colourable pretext for incredulity and distrust. This is wonderful indeed, to see the Jews at once such ardent lovers of the things which were prophesied, and yet such violent haters of the accomplishment of those very prophecies; and that this hatred itself should have been also foretold.

To give sufficient credibility to the Messiah, it was necessary that certain prophecies should precede His appearance, and should remain in the custody of unsuspected persons, of diligence, fidelity, and extraordinary zeal, and such as were known to the rest of mankind.

That things might succeed accordingly, God made choice of this carnal people, to whom He intrusted the predictions concerning the Messiah, which described Him as a deliverer, and a dispenser of carnal blessings, which they loved. Hence they had an extraordinary zeal for their prophets, and held out to all the world those books which foretold the Messiah; assuring all nations that He would certainly come in the very manner expressed by their records, which they kept open to the view of the whole world. But being deceived by His coming in

such a mean and ignominious condition, they became His greatest opposers. So that here is a people, who, of all mankind, can be least suspected of favouring us, nevertheless supporting our cause; and, by the zeal which they shew for their law and their prophets, preserving, with the most incorruptible exactness, our evidences, and their own condemnation.

Those who have rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, who was an offence to them, are the same people who preserved those writings which testify concerning Him, and which affirm that He shall be despised and rejected by them. Thus their refusal of Him has borne express testimony to Him; and He has been equally demonstrated by the righteous Jews who received Him, and by the wicked Jews who rejected Him; both having been exactly foretold.

For this reason the prophecies have a double sense, one spiritual, to which this people were strongly averse, concealed under a literal one, which they liked. If the spiritual sense had been disclosed to them, as they were unable to embrace it, and could not have borne it, they would have had very little zeal to preserve their writings and ceremonial institutions: and if they had relished these spiritual promises, and preserved them uncorrupted till the time of the Messiah, their evidence would have been deprived of its force, as being the testimony of His friends. We see, therefore, the necessity for veiling the spiritual sense: but yet, on the other hand, if its obscurity had been too deep for discovery, it could not have been an evidence of the Messiah. What, therefore, was done? The spiritual sense was disguised under the literal, in most places; but in some, was expressly and clearly delivered. Moreover, the time and state of the world were so exactly foretold, that the sun itself is not clearer. And there

are some passages in which the spiritual meaning is so clearly explained, that no blindness short of that which the flesh brings upon a mind that is entirely enslaved by it, can withhold us from discerning it.

Such then was the conduct of God. In an infinite number of places the spiritual sense is covered over with another; yet in some, though rarely, it is openly revealed: but in such a manner, that the passages in which it is concealed admit of both interpretations, while those in which it is explained can admit only of the spiritual.

This method could not therefore lead men into error; nor could any, but a people whose heart was so entirely carnal, have misunderstood it.

For when good things were promised them in abundance, what could hinder them from interpreting these promises of real blessings, but their concupiscence, which made them expect in them of earthly advantages? Whereas those whose only treasure was in God, would have referred them entirely to God. For there are two principles which divide the wills of men, concupiscence and charity. It is not indeed impossible that concupiscence should co-exist with faith, or charity with temporal possessions: but concupiscence avails itself of God, to enjoy the world; the latter makes use of the world, but enjoys God.

Again, the end which we pursue is that which gives names to things. Whatever hinders us in the prosecution of that, we consider as an enemy. Thus the creatures, which are good in themselves, are the enemies of good men when they lead them from God; and God Himself is accounted an enemy by those whom He thwarts in their lusts.

Hence the appellation of enemy being applied according to the end men have in view; good men understood it of their pas-

sions, and carnal men of the Babylonians; so that these terms were only obscure to the wicked. And this was the meaning of Isaiah when he said, "Seal the law among my disciples[a]." And, that Christ should be "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence[b]," "but blessed are those who shall not be offended in Him[c]." Hosea also says the same thing: "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things; prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein[d]."

Yet the Old Testament was so framed, that while it enlightened some, and blinded others, it demonstrated in the latter the truth which it revealed to the former. For the visible blessings which they received from God were so great and divine, that they evidently testified His power to give them those which were invisible, and also a Messiah.

The time of our Lord's first coming is expressly foretold; but that of His second is not. Because the first was to be private, whereas the second will be glorious, and so manifest, that His enemies themselves will acknowledge Him. But though His first appearance was to be obscure, and discernible only by those who searched the Scriptures, God had so ordered things, that all this contributed to characterize Him. The Jews proved Him by receiving Him; for they were depositaries of the prophecies: and they proved Him also by rejecting Him, because in this they accomplished the prophecies.

The Jews had both miracles and prophecies which they saw fulfilled; the peculiar doctrine of their law was the love and adoration of only one God; and this was perpetual: it had, therefore, every mark of the true religion; and so

[a] Isa. viii. 16. [b] ver. 14. [c] Matt. xi. 6. [d] Hos. xiv. 9.

it really was. But we are to distinguish between the doctrine of the Jews, and the doctrine of the law of the Jews. For the doctrine of the Jews was not true, although it had miracles and prophecies, and perpetuity on its side; because it was deficient in the main principle, of loving and adoring God only.

The Jewish religion must therefore be considered very differently in the tradition of their saints, and in the tradition of the people. Its morality and happiness are both ridiculous, according to the tradition of the people; but they are incomparable in that of their saints. Its foundation is wonderful; it is the most ancient and most authentic book in the world. And whereas Mahomet, that his writings might continue, has forbidden them to be read; Moses, that his might continue, has commanded every body to read them.

The religion of the Jews is altogether divine in its authority, its duration, its perpetuity, its morality, its conduct, its doctrine, its effects. It was formed as a representation of the reality of the Messiah; and the reality of the Messiah was made evident by the Jewish religion, which represented Him.

Under the Jewish economy truth appeared only in figure: in heaven it is without veil: in the Church it is veiled, but discerned by its correspondence to the figure. As the figure was first built upon the truth, so the truth is now distinguishable by the figure.

He that forms his judgment of the Jewish religion by its exterior, will judge wrongly. It is to be seen in the sacred writings, and in the traditions of the prophets, who sufficiently proved that they did not understand the law according to the letter. Our religion, in like manner, is divine in the Gospel, in the Apostles, and in its traditions; but it is utterly disfigured in those who treat it injudiciously.

The Jews were of two

classes; some were merely pagan in their affections, while others were really Christian.

The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, was to be a mighty temporal prince. According to carnal Christians, He is come to dispense with our loving God, and to give us Sacraments which shall do every thing without us. This is no more the religion of Christians, than that was the religion of the Jews.

The true Jews and true Christians agree in acknowledging a Messiah, who shall make them love God, and by that love shall make them triumph over their enemies.

The veil which is upon the Scriptures, in respect to the carnal Jews, is there, likewise, in respect to wicked Christians, and all those who do not hate themselves. But how well are we disposed to understand them, and to become acquainted with Jesus Christ, when we are once made properly to abhor ourselves

Carnal Jews fill the middle place between Christians and pagans. The pagans knew not God, and loved nothing but the world. The Jews knew the true God, and still loved nothing but the world. Christians know the true God, and love not the world: Jews and pagans love the same world; Christians and Jews know the same God.

The Jews are a people visibly framed to be the standing witnesses of the Messiah. They preserve the Scriptures; they love them and yet do not understand them. And all this has been foretold; for it is said, that the statutes of God should be delivered to them, but "as a book that is sealed."

So long as there were prophets to support the law, the people were negligent: but when the prophet, ceased, the zeal of the people supplied their place; which is a providence too remarkable to be overlooked.

CHAPTER XI.

MOSES.

WHEN the creation of the world became a distant event, God provided a contemporary historian, and appointed a whole nation for the keepers of His history, in order that it might be the most authentic in the world, and that all mankind might hence be informed of a fact, which it was so necessary for them to know, and yet was impossible to be known in any other way.

Moses was a very able man. This is indisputable. Had he, therefore, written with a design to deceive, he would have done it in such a manner as not to be convicted of the deceit. He has, however, done just the reverse; for if what he delivered had been fabulous, there was not a single Jew but could have detected the imposture.

Why, for instance, does he make the lives of the first men so long, and their generations so few? In a multitude of generations he might have sheltered himself from discovery; but in so few this was impracticable. For it is not the number of years, but the multitude of generations, which renders things ob scure.

Truth is enfeebled only by the changes among men, Yet he places the two greatest events that were ever conceived, the creation and the deluge, so close together, that they touch, as it were, from the few genera tions which he reckons between them. Insomuch that at the time of his registering these things, the memory of them could not but be still fresh in the minds of all the Jewish nation.

Lamech had seen Adam; Shem had seen Lamech; Abraham, Shem; Jacob, Abraham; and Moses those who had seen Jacob. There-

fore the creation and the deluge are indubitably true. This will be acknowledged as conclusive by certain persons, who will readily understand it.

The longevity of the patriarchs, instead of contributing to the decay of past facts, served, on the contrary, to their preservation. For the reason why we are not often sufficiently instructed in the history of our ancestors is, because we have seldom lived with them, or because they died before we attained the age of reason. But when men lived to so great an age, children lived long with their parents, and had much opportunity of conversing with them; now what could have been the subject of their conversation, but the history of their progenitors; since this comprised all history whatever, and men were not then acquainted with the arts and sciences, which now take up so large a share in our discourse? And it is evident that the keeping exact genealogies was the peculiar care of those earlier times.

CHAPTER XII.

FIGURES.

THERE are some figures clear and demonstrative, and there are others which appear less natural, and prove nothing but to those who have been previously convinced. The latter resemble those of some men who build prophecies on the Revelations, which they expound according to their own fancy. But there is this difference between them, that they have no infallible predictions to support those which they introduce. So that they are guilty of the highest injustice, when they pretend theirs to be as well grounded as some of ours; because they have not any others which are incontest

able as we have. The case therefore is by no means parallel. We are not to level and confound things which agree in one respect, when they are so vastly different in another.

Jesus Christ, prefigured by Joseph, the beloved of his father, and by him sent to visit his brethren, is the innocent person whom his brethren sold for twenty pieces of silver, and who, by this means, became their lord, their saviour, the saviour of strangers, and of the whole world; which had not happened but for their plot of destroying him, making him an outcast, and selling him for a slave.

Joseph was an innocent man in prison between two criminals, Jesus on the cross between two thieves: Joseph foretels deliverance to one of his companions, and death to the other, from the same tokens; Jesus Christ saves one and leaves the other, after the same crimes: Joseph could only foretel; Jesus Christ performed what He foretold: Joseph requests the person who should be delivered to be mindful of him in his glory; the man saved by Jesus Christ entreats He will remember him when He comes into His kingdom.

Grace is the figure of glory; for it is not the ultimate object. It was prefigured by the law, and it prefigures glory; but so that it is itself the way to arrive at glory.

The synagogue was not destroyed, because it was the figure of the Church: and because it was only the figure, it fell into servitude. The figure subsisted till the arrival of the substance, that the Church might always be visible, either in the representation or the reality.

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT THE LAW WAS FIGURATIVE.

To establish at once the authority of both Testaments, we have only to observe whether that which is prophesied in the one be accomplished in the other.

In order to examine the prophecies, we must first of all understand them. For, supposing them to have but one sense, the Messiah cannot be come; but, supposing them to have two senses, He certainly is come, in the person of Jesus Christ.

All the question, therefore, is, whether they have a double meaning? Whether they are figures or realities; that is to say, whether we ought to seek something more in them than immediately presents itself, or whether we ought to confine ourselves to that construction which offers itself at first view?

If the law and the sacrifices were the substance, they would necessarily be acceptable to God, and not be displeasing to Him. If they were only figurative, they would be both pleasing and displeasing to Him, in different respects. Now, throughout the Scripture, they both please and displease Him; therefore they were only figurative.

To see clearly that the old dispensation was merely figurative, and that the prophets when they spake of temporal blessings had others in view, we have only to consider, first, that it would be unworthy of God to call men to the enjoyment of nothing but temporal happiness; and secondly, that while the words of the prophets clearly convey a promise of temporal blessings, they yet affirm that their expressions are obscure, that their meaning is not that which an-

pears obvious at first, and that it would only be understood by the issue of events. They therefore knew they were speaking of other sacrifices, another deliverer, &c.

It must also be remarked, that their expressions would contradict and invalidate each other, if by the words law and sacrifice, only the law and the sacrifices instituted by Moses are to be understood. Nay, there would be a manifest and gross contradiction in their writings, and sometimes even in the same chapter. From whence it follows, that they must have had something further in prospect.

It is said that the law shall be changed; that the sacrifice shall be changed; that they shall be without kings, without princes, and without sacrifices; that a new covenant shall be established; that the law shall be renewed; that the commandments they had received were not good; that their sacrifices were abominable, and that God had not required them.

It is also said on the other hand that the law shall abide for ever; that the covenant shall be eternal, the sacrifices perpetual; that the sceptre should never depart from them, till the everlasting King was come. Do these expressions prove the law to be the substance? No. Do they demonstrate it to be the figure? No. But that it must be either the substance or the figure. Now the former, by excluding the substance, prove it can only be the figure.

All these passages taken together cannot be applied to the substance; but they may be all applied to the figure: therefore they were spoken of the figure, and not of the substance.

To know whether the law and the sacrifices are real or figurative, we must take notice whether the prophets, in speaking of these things, had their views and their thoughts so entirely fixed on them, as to look

no further than the old covenant; or whether they did not discern somewhat else, of which all this was a representation; for in a picture we discover the thing represented. Now in order to this, we need only examine what they say.

When they say the covenant shall be everlasting, do they mean the same which they affirm shall be changed? And so of the sacrifices, &c.

The prophets have expressly said, that Israel shall always be beloved of God, and that the law shall endure for ever. But they have likewise said that their meaning was hidden, and would not be understood.

We have a double meaning in a writing in cypher. Suppose we intercept an important letter, in which we are told there is one obvious meaning, and that nevertheless the sense is so obscured that we shall even see the letter without seeing it, and understand it without understanding it; what are we to judge, but that the cypher has a two-fold meaning? which is moreover apparent from the evident contradictions we meet with in the literal construction of it. How ought we then to esteem those who decipher this writing to us, and make us acquainted with its hidden meaning, especially when they go upon principles perfectly natural and clear. This is what Jesus Christ and His Apostles have done: they have opened the seal, they have rent the veil, and laid open the spiritual sense. They have taught us that our enemies are our passions, that our Redeemer is to be a spiritual Redeemer; that He is to have a first and a second coming, the one in humility to abase the proud, the other in glory to exalt the humble; that Jesus Christ is God as well as man.

Jesus Christ made it His whole business to teach men that they were lovers of themselves; that they

were enslaved, blind, distempered, miserable, and sinful; that it was needful He should deliver them, enlighten them, bless them, and heal them: that this was to be effected by hating themselves, and following Him; by poverty, and the death of the cross.

The letter killeth. It was necessary that Christ should suffer. In a God who has humbled Himself; in circumcision of the heart; a true fast, a true sacrifice, a true temple, a two-fold law, a two-fold table of the law, a two-fold captivity—we behold the cypher He has presented to us.

He has now taught us that all these things were but figures; and what it is to be truly free, to be a true Israelite; wherein consists true circumcision, the true bread of heaven, &c.

By these promises every one may detect which lies nearest his heart, spiritual or temporal blessings; God or creatures: but with this difference, that they who look in the promises only for creatures, find them attended with numerous contradictions, with a prohibition to love them, and with a command to worship God alone, and to love nothing but Him: whereas they who seek God in them, find Him without any contradiction, and with a pleasing command to love none but Him only.

The sources of the contrarieties in scriptures, are a God humbled to the death of the cross, a Messiah triumphing over death by dying Himself; the two natures in Jesus Christ; His two-fold coming; and the two states of the nature of man.

As we cannot justly describe a man's character without accounting for all his contrarieties, and as it is not enough to pursue a train of agreeable qualities, without explaining those which appear to be opposite; so, in order to understand the sense of an author all the contrary passages must be reconciled.

In order, therefore, to

understand Scripture, we must have a sense in which all the opposite passages agree. It is not sufficient to have one in which many consonant passages unite, but we must have one in which the most dissonant shall agree.

Every author either has a meaning in which all the different passages will agree, or he has no meaning at all. The latter cannot be said of the Scriptures, nor of the prophets: they unquestionably had too much good sense. We must therefore look out for a meaning by which all the discordant parts may be reconciled.

Their true sense, therefore, cannot be that of the Jews. But in Jesus Christ all the contradictions are harmonized.

The Jews could not make the abrogation of the royalty and principality, foretold by Hosea, accord with the prophecy of Jacob.

If we take the law, the sacrifices, and the kingdom, for the things ultimately designed, we shall not be able to reconcile all the passages of the same author nor of the same book, nor, often, of the same chapter: and this sufficiently discovers the intention of the author.

The Jews were not permitted to offer sacrifice, or so much as to eat the tenths out of Jerusalem, which was the place that the Lord had chosen.

Hosea foretold that the Jews should be without a king, without a prince, without sacrifice, and without idols; which is at this time accomplished: for no sacrifice can be legally offered out of Jerusalem.

Whenever the word of God, which is true, would be false if taken literally, it is true spiritually. Sit thou on My right hand: literally this is false, yet spiritually it is true. In such expressions God speaks after the manner of men: and this only implies that the same intentions as men have in making others sit at their right hand, God will also have with respect

to the Messiah. It is therefore a mark of the divine intention, but not of the manner in which it is to be carried into effect.

So when it is said to the Israelites, God has received the odour of your incense, and will give you in recompence a fertile and plentiful land; the meaning is, that the same intention which a man delighted with your incense would have in rewarding you with a fruitful land, God will express towards you; because you have had the same intention with respect to Him, that a man would express toward another by offering him incense.

The sole aim of the Scripture is Charity. All that does not directly tend to that single point is the figure of it. For as there is but one end in view, whatever does not lead to it in express terms is figurative.

God in compassion to our weakness, which makes us seek for variety, has so diversified this one precept of charity, that He leads by this very variety to the one thing needful for us. For one thing only is needful, and we love variety. Now God provides for both these facts by a variety which always leads to the one thing needful.

The Rabbins take the breasts of the spouse for figure; as they do every thing which does not express the only end they have in view, namely, temporal blessings.

Some of them see clearly enough that the only enemy of man is concupiscence, which turns him away from God; and that God alone, and not a fruitful land, is his real good.

Those who fancy the good of man to consist in gratifying the flesh, and his evil in what draws him off from the pleasures of sense, let them wallow and die in their pleasures. But as for those who seek God with their whole heart, whom nothing can grieve but being deprived of the light of His countenance, whose only desire is to enjoy Him

and whose only enemies are those which withhold them from Him; whose affliction it is to see themselves surrounded and overruled by such enemies, let them be comforted: for them there is a Deliverer, for them there is a God! The Messiah was promised to deliver men from their enemies; and He came to deliver them from their sins, and not from their external foes.

When David predicts that the Messiah shall deliver His people from their enemies, a carnal expositor may apply this to the Egyptians: and then I could not shew him that the prophecy has been fulfilled. But it may be well applied to men's iniquities, since the Egyptians are not men's real enemies, but their iniquities are. So that the word enemy is ambiguous.

But as he also declares, together with Isaiah, and others, that the Messiah shall deliver His people from their sins, the ambiguity is taken off, and the double meaning of enemies is reduced to the single interpretation of iniquities. For if he had sins in view, he might well denote them by the term enemies: but if he had only temporal enemies in view, it was impossible he should distinguish them by the appellation of sins.

Now Moses, David, and Isaiah, all employ the same terms. Who then can say that these terms have not the same sense; and that the intention of David, who evidently means sins when he speaks of men's enemies, is not the same as that of Moses when he is speaking of their enemies.

Daniel, in his ninth chapter, prays that the people may be delivered from the captivity of their enemies; but he thought of their transgressions: and to make it clear he relates the coming of Gabriel to him, to assure him he was heard: and that he had only to wait seventy weeks, after which the people should obtain deliverance from their iniquity,

that transgression should be brought to an end, and the Redeemer, the Holy of Holies, should bring in, not legal, but everlasting righteousness.

When we are once let into this mystery, it is impossible not to discern it. Let us read the Old Testament with this view: let us see whether the sacrifices were real sacrifices, whether Abraham's lineage was the true cause of the friendship of God to him? Whether the promised land was the true place of rest? Neither of these can be affirmed; therefore they were only symbolical. In a word, let us examine all the legal ceremonies, and all the precepts which are not of charity, and we shall find they are nothing but representations.

[It is better not to fast and be humbled, than to fast and feel justified.]

CHAPTER XIV.

JESUS CHRIST.

THE infinite distance between body and spirit is a figure of the infinitely more infinite distance between our spirit and charity, which is absolutely supernatural.

All the splendour of outward grandeur has no lustre in the eyes of those who are engaged in mental researches.

The greatness of men of talents is invisible to the rich, to kings, and conquerors, and to all these earthly great ones.

The greatness of that wisdom which cometh from God, is invisible to the worldly, and to men of talents. Here are three orders of quite different kinds.

Great geniuses have their empire, their splendour, their greatness, their victories, and do not stand in need of carnal greatness,

which has no relation to that which they seek. They are to be seen with the mind, and not with the eye; but that is enough for them.

Saints likewise have their empire, their splendour, their greatness, and their victories; and have no need either of carnal or mental greatness, which are not of their order, and neither increase nor diminish the greatness to which they aspire. They are seen of God and of angels, and not with the eye of the body, nor by curious minds; and God is sufficient for them.

[That which prevents our making a just comparison of what used to take place in the Church with what may now be seen in it is this, we look on the saints as being crowned with glory and like unto gods, now that time has made things clear it appears so, but at the time of his persecution (speaking of St. Athanasius) this great saint was a man named Athanasius, Elias was a man like unto us, and subject to the same passions as we are, says St. Peter, to undeceive Christians with regard to the erroneous idea, that makes us reject the example of the saints, as being unsuited to our state: he was a saint, say we, when speaking of such, he was not like unto us.]

Archimedes would have been held in the same estimation, without any splendour of birth. He fought no battles; but he has left to all the world his admirable inventions. O how great and illustrious does he appear to the eyes of the mind!

Jesus Christ, without riches, without any external display of science, stands in His own order, that of holiness. He neither published inventions, nor reigned over kingdoms; but He was humble, patient, pure before God; terrible to devils, and altogether without sin. O with what illustrious pomp, with what transcendent magnificence did He come

such as see with the eyes of the heart, and are the discerners of true wisdom!

It would have been useless for Archimedes to have acted the prince, in his book of geometry, although he really was one.

It would have been useless for our Lord Jesus Christ to have come as an earthly king, in order that He might shine in His kingdom of holiness. But how consistently did He come with the character of His own order!

It is ridiculous to be scandalized at the mean condition of Jesus Christ, as if that meanness stood in the same order with the greatness which He came to display. Let us contemplate this greatness in His life, in His sufferings, in His obscurity, in His death, in the choice of His attendants, in their forsaking Him, in His secret resurrection, and in all the other parts of His history, and we shall see it to be so great as to leave no ground for being offended at His meanness, for there was no meanness in Him.

But there are some who can admire no greatness but that of this world; as if there was none in understanding; and others admire only that of the understanding, as if there was not a greatness infinitely more sublime in heavenly wisdom.

The whole system of bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth, and the kingdoms of it, are inferior in value to the meanest of spirits; because a spirit is capable of knowing all this, and itself also, which body is not. And the whole system of bodies and spirits together, is unequal to the least motion of charity; for it is of an order infinitely more exalted.

From all bodies together, we could not extract a single thought; it is impossible,—for thought is quite of a different order. Again, all bodies and spirits together are unable to produce one movement of real charity. This is likewise

impossible, for charity is of another order, entirely supernatural.

Jesus Christ lived in so much obscurity, (as the world terms obscurity,) that historians who record only things of importance, have scarcely taken any notice of Him.

Yet what man ever possessed so much glory as Jesus Christ? The whole Jewish nation predicted Him before His coming; the gentile world adore Him since His coming. Both Jews and gentiles regard Him as their centre. And yet who ever enjoyed so little of so much glory? Of thirty-three years, He spent thirty in privacy. During the other three He passed for an impostor, the priests and rulers of His nation rejected Him, His friends and His kinsmen despised Him; and, at last, He died an ignominious death, betrayed by one of His attendants, denied by another, and deserted by all.

What share then had He in this glory? No man had ever so much, and yet no man was ever in a meaner condition. All His glory was therefore for our sakes, to render Him evident to us, but was not intended to aggrandize Himself.

Jesus Christ speaks of the sublimest subjects in a manner as simple as if He had never considered them, but nevertheless His expressions are so exact as to shew that He had thoroughly weighed them. Such accuracy with such simplicity is admirable.

Who made the evangelists acquainted with the qualities of a soul truly heroic, that they should paint it so perfectly as they have done in Jesus Christ? Why do they describe Him as weak in His agony? Did they not know how to describe a courageous death? Yes, certainly: for St. Luke describes that of St. Stephen more forcibly in this respect than he has done that of our Lord. They therefore represent Him as capable of fear b-

fore His death actually arrived; but as dauntless afterward when it came. When He is described as afflicted, His affliction is from Himself; but when troubled by men He is unmoved.

The Church has been obliged to prove that Christ was Man, against those who have denied it, as well as to prove that He was God; for appearances were as much against the one as against the other.

Jesus Christ is a God to whom we approach without pride, and before whom we are humbled without despair.

[No doctrine can be better for man, than that which shews him his two-fold capacity of receiving and of forfeiting grace, because of the two-fold danger he is ever in of despair or presumption.]

The conversion of the heathen was reserved for the grace of the Messiah. The Jews either did not attempt it, or their attempts were unsuccessful. All that the prophets and Solomon had said on the subject was unavailing. Their wise men, as Plato and Socrates, could not persuade them to worship the true God alone.

The gospel says nothing of the early life of the Virgin Mary, but what relates to the birth of Jesus Christ, that every thing might bear reference to Him.

Both Testaments refer to Jesus Christ; the former as its hope; the latter as its example; and both as their centre.

The prophets had the gift of foretelling, but never were foretold themselves: the saints which followed were foretold, but had not the power of foretelling: Jesus Christ both prophesied and was prophesied of.

Jesus Christ for all mankind; Moses for a single nation.

The Jews were blessed in Abraham: "I will bless them that bless thee[a]." But all nations are blessed in

[a] Gen. xii. 2.

Abraham's seed: "A light to lighten the gentiles[b]," &c. "He has not done so to any nation," says David[c], speaking of the law. He has done so to all nations, may we say, speaking of Jesus Christ.

Thus it is the prerogative of Jesus Christ to be an universal blessing. The Church offers sacrifice only for believers; Jesus Christ offered that of the cross for all.

Let us then stretch out our arms to our Deliverer; Who, having been promised four thousand years, came at length to suffer and to die for us, at the time and under all the circumstances that were foretold: and waiting by His grace to die in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to Him, let us in the meanwhile live with comfort; both among the good things which it may please Him to give us, and among the evil things which He may send us for our good, and which, by His own example, He has taught us to endure.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EVIDENCES OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE PROPHECIES.

The most striking evidences of Jesus Christ are the prophecies; and therefore God has ordered them with peculiar care. For the full accomplishment of them is a miracle which extends from the beginning of the Church to the end. Sixteen hundred years together God raised up a succession of prophets; and in the four hundred years following He dispersed their prophecies along with the Jews, who carried them into all parts of the world. Such was the preparation for the

[b] Luke ii. 32.

[c] Ps. cxlvii. 20.

birth of Jesus Christ! As His gospel was to be believed by all nations, it was necessary, not only that there should be prophecies to gain it this belief, but likewise that they should be diffused through all the world, that all the world might receive Him.

If only one single man had left a book of predictions concerning Jesus Christ, as to the time and manner of His coming, and He had come agreeably to those predictions, it would have infinite weight. But here is much more. Here is a succession of men for four thousand years, who regularly, and without variation, succeed one another to fortel the same event. A whole people are His harbingers; and they subsist four thousand years, to testify, in a body, the assurances they have respecting Him, from which no threats or persecutions could oblige them to depart. This is in every view remarkable.

The exact time was pointed out in the predictions by the state of the Jews, by that of the heathen world, by that of the temples, and by the number of years.

The prophets having given various signs which were all to concur at the coming of the Messiah, it was necessary they should all meet at the same period. Thus it was necessary that the fourth monarchy should be established at the expiration of Daniel's seventy weeks; that the sceptre should then be taken from Judah, and then that the Messiah should appear. And at that juncture Jesus Christ appeared, and declared Himself to be the Messiah.

It is foretold that under the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, before the dominion of the Jews was taken away, and in the seventieth of Daniel's weeks, the heathens should be instructed, and brought to the knowledge of the

God who was adored by the Jews; that those who loved Him should be delivered from their enemies, and be filled with His fear and love.

And it happened that in the time of the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, &c., the pagans in multitudes adored the true God, and led an angelic life; women consecrated to religion their virginity, and their lives; men voluntarily renounced all the pleasures of sense. That which Plato was unable to persuade a few of the wisest and best informed men of his time to do, a Secret Power, by means of a few words, now effected in thousands of uneducated men.

What can all this mean? It is that which was foretold many ages before. "I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh[e]." All nations lay in infidelity and lust. All the world now becomes burning with charity; princes renounce their grandeur; even young women suffer martyrdom; children forsake the houses of their parents to go and live in deserts. Whence springs this courage? The Messiah is come; behold the effects and the tokens of His coming.

For two thousand years together the God of the Jews remained unknown to an infinite multitude of pagan nations. Yet, at the precise time foretold, the pagans throng to adore this only true God; the idol temples are destroyed; kings submit themselves to the cross. What is the cause of all this? It is the Spirit of God poured out upon the earth.

It was foretold that the Messiah should come to establish a new covenant with His people, which would make them forget their departure out of Egypt[f]. That He would write His law, not on tables of stone, but on their hearts[g], and put His fear, which was till then displayed in external ceremonies, into their hearts likewise[h].

[e] Joel ii. 28. [f] Jer. xxiii. 7. [g] Ib. xxxi. 33. [h] Ib. xxxii. 40.

That the Jews should reject our Lord, and should themselves be rejected of God, the choice vine bringeth forth only wild grapes[i]. That the chosen people should prove disloyal, ungrateful, and incredulous. A rebellious and gainsaying people[k]. That God should strike them with blindness, and that, like blind men, they should stumble at noon-day[l].

That the Church should be small in its beginning, and should afterwards increase[m].

It was foretold that idolatry should then be overthrown; that this Messiah should cause the idols to fall, and bring men to the worship of the true God[n].

That the idol temples should be cast down, and that in all places of the world men should offer to God pure sacrifices, and not those of beasts[o].

That He should teach men the perfect way.

That He should reign over Jews and gentiles.

No person has ever appeared before, or since, who has taught any thing corresponding to these predictions.

After so many persons who predicted His coming, Jesus Christ came and said, I am He, and this is the time I was to come. He came to teach men, that they have no other enemies but themselves; that their passions have separated them from God; that He came to deliver them from these enemies, to give them His grace, in order to form out of all nations one holy Church, into which He would bring both Jews and Gentiles; and that He would destroy the idolatry of the one, and the superstition of the other.

What the prophets have foretold should come to pass, My apostles, said He, will shortly accomplish. The Jews are on the point of being rejected; Jerusalem shall soon be destroyed; the gentiles will soon be brought

[i] Isa. v. 2—7. [k] Isa. lxv. 2. [l] Deut. xxviii. 28, 29.
[m] Ezek. xvii. 22—24. [n] Isa. ii. 18. [o] Mal. i. 11.

to the knowledge of the true God, and My apostles shall be their instructors, after you have slain the Son, who is the heir of the vineyard.

And afterward His apostles said plainly to the Jews, the curse is now going to be executed upon you. And they declared to the gentiles that they were to be brought to the true knowledge of God.

To this all men are averse, through the natural influence of their concupiscence. Hence this King of Jews and Gentiles was oppressed by both, who conspired to take away His life. All that is great in the world, the learned, the wise, and the mighty, unite to oppose this rising religion. Some write against it, others condemn it, and others put to death its professors. But in spite of all these different oppositions, we see Jesus Christ in a very little time reigning over them all; destroying the Jewish worship in Jerusalem, which was the centre of it, and from which His Church was first taken, and idol worship in Rome, which was the centre of it, and where His principal Church was afterward established.

Persons of no education or power, for such were the apostles and primitive Christians, withstood all the powers of the earth; overcame kings, together with the learned and the wise, and subverted idolatry, though so firmly established in the world. And all this was brought to pass by the sole influence of that Word which had foretold it.

The Jews, by putting to death Jesus Christ, that they might not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah, gave Him the final mark of actually being the Messiah. And by persisting to misjudge Him, they became irrefragable witnesses of Him: for by their slaying Him, and continuing to disown Him, the prophecies were fulfilled.

Who can do otherwise than recognise Jesus Christ by the number of particular circumstances which

predicted of Him? For it was declared,

That He should have a forerunner[p].

That He should be born an infant[q].

That He should be born in the city of Bethlehem; that He should spring from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David; and that He should principally appear at Jerusalem[r].

That He should blind the eyes of the wise and learned, and preach the Gospel to the poor and despised; that He should open the eyes of the blind, restore health to the diseased, and give light to those who languished in darkness[s].

That He should teach the perfect way, and be the instructor of the gentiles[t].

That He should be a sacrifice for the sins of the world[u].

That He should be the chief and precious corner stone[x].

That He should, at the same time, be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence[y].

That the Jews should fall upon this rock[z].

That this stone should be rejected by the builders; that God would make it the head of the corner[a], that it should grow into a great mountain, and fill the whole earth[b].

That thus He should be disowned, betrayed, sold, buffeted, derided, and afflicted by a thousand different methods; that they should give Him gall to drink, should pierce His hands and His feet, should spit in His face, should kill Him, and cast lots upon His vesture[c].

That He should rise again the third day from the dead[d].

That He should ascend into heaven, and sit at the right hand of God[e].

That kings should set themselves in arms against Him[f].

[p] Mal. iii. 1. [q] Isa. ix. 6. [r] Mic. v. 2. [s] Isa. v. 15; xxxv. 5; ix. 2. [t] Isa. xlii. 6. [u] Isa. liii. [x] Isa. xxviii. 26. [y] Isa. viii. 14. [z] Isa. viii. 15. [a] Ps. cxviii. 22. [b] Dan. ii. 35. [c] Zach. xi. 12; Ps. lxix. 21; Ps. xxii. 16, 18. [d] Ps. xvi. 10; Hos. vi. 3. [e] Ps. cx. 1. [f] Ps. ii. 2.

That sitting at the right hand of the Father, He should triumph over all His enemies[g].

That the kings of the earth, and all the people, should worship Him[h].

That the Jews should subsist as a distinct people[i].

That they should wander about without princes, without sacrifices, without an altar, without prophets, looking for deliverance, and not finding it[k].

The Messiah was Himself to produce a numerous people, elect, sacred, and peculiar; to guide, support, and lead them into a place of rest and of holiness; to make them holy unto God; to make them the temple of God; to reconcile them to God; to save them from His wrath; to rescue them from the tyranny of sin, which reigns so visibly over men; to give laws to this people; to engrave these laws in their hearts; to offer Himself to God for them; to be made a sacrifice for them; to be at once the spotless sacrifice, and the Priest; He was to offer Himself, His body, and His blood, and also to offer bread and wine to God. Jesus Christ has done all this.

It was foretold, that He should come as a deliverer, who should bruise Satan's head, who should save His people from their sins; from all their sins. That there should be a new covenant, which should be eternal, and another priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, which should be everlasting. That Jesus Christ should be powerful, mighty, and glorious, and yet so mean as not to be acknowledged; that He should not be taken for what He really was; that He should be rejected and slain; that the people who had denied Him should be no more His people; that those who had been idolaters should receive Him and trust in Him; that He should quit Zion to reign in the very centre of idolatrous worship; that notwithstanding all this, the

[g] Ps. cx. 1, 2. [h] Isa. lx. 10. [i] Jer. xxxi. 36. [k] Hos. iii. 4, &c.

Jews should ever continue; that He should arise out of Judah, when the sceptre was departed from them.

Let any man consider, that from the beginning of the world, either the expectation or the worship of the Messiah continued without interruption; that He was promised to the first man, immediately after his fall; that after him others declared that God had revealed to them that a Redeemer should be born who would save His people; that Abraham afterwards was raised up to say that this Redeemer should proceed from a son which he was to have; that Jacob declared that out of his twelve children Judah was the one from whom He should descend; that Moses and the Prophets came after this, and predicted the time and manner of His coming; that they said their law was only a preparation for that of the Messiah; that until His was promulgated, theirs should subsist; that thus either theirs or His should always remain in the world; that it has actually so remained; and that at length Jesus Christ came under all the circumstances which were foretold. Surely this must appear astonishing.

But, it may be said, if all this was so clearly foretold to the Jews, how came they not to believe on Him? Or how is it they are not exterminated for having resisted so clear a revelation; I reply, that both were predicted, that they would not believe it, clear as it was, and also that they should not be exterminated. And nothing could be more glorious to the Messiah; for it was not sufficient for this to be foretold; but the prophecies were also preserved without the shadow of suspicion.

The prophets have interwoven particular prophecies with those which relate to the Messiah; that the prophecies concerning Him might not be without proof, and that the particular prophecies might not be unedifying.

"We have no king but Cæsar," said the Jews[1]. Therefore Jesus Christ was the Messiah, since they had no king but a stranger, and chose to have no other.

Daniel's seventy weeks are rendered disputable, as to the time of their beginning, by the phraseology of the prophecy; and, as to their expiration, by the differences among chronologists. And yet all this variety amounts to no more than two hundred years.

The same prophecies which represent Jesus Christ as in poverty, represent Him as the Master of the world.

Those prophecies which express the time of our Lord's coming, only speak of Him as the ruler of the Gentiles, and as a sufferer; not as in the clouds, nor as a judge; and those which represent Him in glory, and judging the nations, specify no particular period.

When the Scriptures speak of the Messiah as great and glorious, it is evident they refer to His judging the world, and not to His redeeming it.

CHAPTER XVI.

VARIOUS PROOFS OF JESUS CHRIST.

If we are not to give credit to the apostles, we must suppose them either to be deceived or deceivers. But neither could have easily been the case. As to the first, it was impossible they should be mistaken in taking a man to be risen from the dead; and as to the other, the supposition of their being impostors is extremely absurd. Let us only examine it at length. Let us imagine these twelve men meeting together after the death of Jesus Christ, and combining to fabricate a re-

[1] John xix. 15.

port of His resurrection. By this they must set all powers against them. The heart of man has a strange inclination to inconstancy and change, to be drawn aside by promises and rewards. Now should only one of them be influenced by all these allurements, or even by imprisonments, tortures, or death itself, they had all been undone. Pursue this supposition.

While Jesus Christ continued with them He might have encouraged them: but afterward, if He did not really appear to them, who was it that made them proceed?

The style of the Gospel is admirable in an infinite number of views; and in this amongst others, that it contains no invectives, on the part of the historians, against Judas, or Pilate, nor against any of the enemies, or the murderers of Jesus Christ.

Had this modesty of the evangelical historians been affected, (along with many other characters of the same excellent temper,) and had they affected it only in order to be taken notice of; if they had not ventured to remark it themselves, they would not have failed to procure friends who should notice it to their advantage. But as they acted without any affectation, and from motives altogether disinterested, they never made any person observe it. Indeed, I do not know that it has been remarked to this day, which shews the simplicity of their whole conduct in the affair.

Jesus Christ performed miracles, and His apostles after Him, and many were also wrought by the primitive Christians; because as the prophecies were not yet fully accomplished, and were to be accomplished by them, nothing but miracles would have been a sufficient evidence of their commission. It was foretold that the Messiah should convert the gentile nations. But how was this prophecy to be fulfilled, if the gentiles were not converted; and

how were they to be converted to the Messiah, without beholding this final effect of the prophecies that proved Him? Till, therefore, He had died, and was risen again, and the gentiles were converted, all was not fulfilled. So that miracles were necessary through the whole of this period. But there is now no necessity for any more to establish the truth of the Christian religion, for the prophecies which are accomplished remain a perpetual miracle.

The present condition of the Jews is also a striking evidence of our religion. It is astonishing to see this people subsisting during so long a course of years, and yet to see them always miserable; it being necessary as an evidence of Jesus Christ, both that they should subsist to be His witnesses, and should be miserable, as His crucifiers. And though to subsist and to be miserable are in some respects contradictory, yet the Jews do subsist, notwithstanding their misery.

But were they not almost in the same condition in the time of the captivity? No: The sceptre was not interrupted by their captivity in Babylon; because their return was promised and foretold. For lest they should imagine the sceptre to be departed from Judah, when Nabuchodonosor carried away the people, they were beforehand assured that they should only remain there for a short period, and should certainly be brought back. They were always consoled by the prophets, and their kings were continued. But the second destruction is without any promise of restoration; without prophets, without kings, without comfort, without hope; the sceptre is now departed from them for ever.

It was scarcely to be considered as being in a state of captivity, to be in it with an assurance of deliverance in seventy years. But they are now without any such hope.

God had promised the-

that though they should be scattered to the very extremities of the earth, yet if they were faithful to His law He would gather them again. They are now faithful to it, and yet remain under oppression. It follows, therefore, that the Messiah is come, and that the law, which contained these promises, has been annulled by the establishment of another.

If the Jews had all been converted by Jesus Christ, we should have none but suspected witnesses; and had they been entirely destroyed, we should have no witnesses at all.

The Jews rejected Christ, but not all of them; so now saints receive Him, and not those who are carnal. And this is so far from diminishing His glory, that it gives the last touch which perfects it.

The argument which the Jews employ, and the only one we find insisted on in their writings, in the Talmud, and by the Rabbins, is, that Jesus Christ did not subdue the nations by force of arms. Jesus Christ, say they, was killed, He was overcome: He did not conquer the gentiles by His power; He has not given us their spoils; He has not enriched us. And is this all they have to say? It is in this He appears so amiable to me: I would not have such a Messiah as they figure to themselves.

How delightful it is to behold, with the eye of faith, Darius, Cyrus, Alexander, the Romans, Pompey, and Herod, all conspiring, without knowing it, to promote the glory of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XVII.

AGAINST MAHOMET.

The Mahometan religion has for its foundation the Alcoran, and Mahomet. But this prophet, who was

to be the last expectation of mankind, has he ever been foretold? Or what token has he to shew, more than any other man who may please to call himself a prophet? What miracles does he himself tell us that he wrought? What mysteries did he teach, even according to his own account? What morality? What felicity?

Mahomet is altogether without authority: his reasons, therefore, ought to be very cogent, as they are to rest entirely on their own force.

Suppose two persons should both talk of things apparently mean; but that the discourses of one should have a two-fold sense, understood by his own followers, while those of the other had but one meaning only: If a person who was not in the secret should hear them speak in this manner, he would be inclined to pass the same judgment on both. But if afterwards, in the remaining part of their conversation, the one should speak of angelical things, and the other should talk of nothing but what was base and vulgar, and even nonsensical,—he must conclude that the one spake mysteriously, and not the other; the one having shewn that he is incapable of absurdity, and capable of being mysterious; and the other, that he is incapable of being mysterious, but is capable of being absurd.

It is not because there is something obscure in Mahomet's doctrine, that may pass for a mysterious meaning, that I would have it decided on; but by those things which are plain, as his paradise, and the like. In these he is ridiculous. But it is not so with the Scriptures. They have their obscurities; but then in other parts they are admirably clear, and their prophecies have been evidently accomplished. The case, therefore, is totally different. We are not to compare and confound things which resemble each other only in obscurity, and not

in having plain and evident passages, which when they are divine are such as oblige us to reverence the obscurities themselves.

The Alcoran says St. Matthew was a good man. Therefore Mahomet was a false prophet,—either in calling wicked men good, or in disbelieving what these good men declared of Jesus Christ.

Any man can do what Mahomet did; for he wrought no miracle, his coming was never foretold. But what Jesus Christ has done no other can do.

Mahomet established his religion by killing others—Jesus Christ by making His followers lay down their own lives; Mahomet by forbidding his law to be read—Jesus Christ by commanding us to read. In a word, the two were so opposite, that if Mahomet took the way, in human probability, to succeed: Jesus Christ took the way, humanly speaking, to be disappointed. And hence, instead of concluding that because Mahomet succeeded, Jesus Christ might in like manner have succeeded; we ought to infer, that since Mahomet has succeeded, Christianity must have inevitably perished, if it had not been supported by a power altogether divine.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DESIGN OF GOD IN CONCEALING HIMSELF FROM SOME, AND REVEALING HIMSELF TO OTHERS.

It was the purpose of God to redeem mankind, and to open the way of salvation to those who should seek it. But men have rendered themselves so unworthy of it, that He justly denies to some, on account of their obduracy, that unmerited mercy which

He grants to others. If He thought fit to surmount the obstinacy of the most hardened, He could easily effect it, by revealing Himself so manifestly to them as to make it impossible for them to doubt the reality of His existence. And thus He will appear at the last day in awful thunder, and such a wreck of nature, that the most blind shall be forced to behold Him.

But this was not the way in which He chose to appear at His milder coming. Because, there being so many among mankind who were rendering themselves unworthy of His compassion, He determined to leave them destitute of a blessing which they did not desire. It was not, therefore, consistent that He should appear in a manner manifestly divine, and capable of convincing all men irresistibly: nor, on the other hand, would it have been right to have been so perfectly concealed as not to be discoverable by those who sought Him sincerely. His design was to render Himself perfectly knowable to the latter; and thus intending to reveal Himself to those who sought Him with their whole heart, and to conceal Himself from those who shunned Him with their whole heart,—He so tempered the knowledge of Himself as to give marks that were visible to those who sought Him, and obscure to those who sought Him not.

There is light enough for those whose sincere desire is to see; and darkness enough for those who are of a contrary disposition.

There is brightness enough to illuminate the elect; and enough of obscurity to humble them.

There is obscurity enough to blind the reprobate; and brightness enough to condemn them, and to leave them without excuse.

If the world subsisted merely to inform men of the being of God; His divinity would shine through it on every side in an undeniable manner. But

as it subsists only by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, and to inform men of their corruption and redemption, every thing beams forth with evidence of these important facts. For all that we can behold neither denotes the total exclusion, nor the manifest presence of God, but the presence of a God who hideth Himself. Every thing bears this character.

If nothing of God had ever appeared, this continual privation would have been equivocal; and might have been equally explained by the non-existence of a Deity, and by the unworthiness of mankind to know any thing of Him. But as He in some instances appears, though not continually,—this takes away the ambiguity. If He has appeared once, He exists for ever. So that we can come to no other conclusion than this, that there is a God, and that men are unworthy to know Him.

The divine intention is more to produce a perfection of the will than of the understanding; but a perfect clearness would only be of use to the understanding, and would be hurtful to the will.

If there were no darkness, men would not feel their depravity; and were there no light, they would have no hope of a remedy. So that it is not only just, but advantageous to us, that God should conceal Himself in part, and discover Himself in part; since it is equally dangerous for men to know God without knowing their own misery,—and to know their own misery, without any knowledge of God.

Every thing informs man of his own condition; but this ought to be rightly understood. For God does not either completely reveal Himself, nor remain altogether concealed. But it is most certainly true that He conceals Himself from those who tempt Him, and reveals Himself to those who seek Him. For though men are altogether unwor-

thy of God, yet at the same time they are capable of enjoying Him. They are unworthy of communion with Him by their corruption; but are capable of it by their original nature.

There is no object on earth which does not proclaim either the misery of man, or the mercy of God; either the impotence of man without God, or the power of man with the assistance of God.

The whole universe teaches man, either that he is depraved, or that he is redeemed. Every thing informs him either of his greatness or his misery. The dereliction of God we may remark in the Pagans: His protection appears in the Jews.

All things work together for good to the elect; even the obscurities of Scripture, which they revere on account of that divine clearness which they understand. And all things work together for evil to the reprobate, not excepting the divine clearness of Scripture, which they blaspheme on account of the obscurities which they do not comprehend.

If Jesus Christ had only come for the purpose of sanctification, the whole of Scripture, and every thing else, would have been directed to this end; and it would have been very easy to convince unbelievers. But since He came, as Isaiah speaks, both "for a sanctuary and a rock of offence[a]," it is impossible for us to conquer their perverseness. But this makes nothing against us, because we affirm that all the divine conduct conveys no conviction to obstinate minds, and such as do not sincerely seek the truth.

Jesus Christ is come, "that those who see not may see; and that those who see may be made blind." He is come to heal the sick, and let the healthy die: to "call sinners to repentance" and justification, and to leave those in their sins who think themselves

[a] Isa. viii. 14.

righteous; to "fill the hungry with good things, and to send the rich empty away."

What do the prophets affirm of Jesus Christ? That He shall appear evidently to be God? No—But that He is a God veiled to the eye of sense; that He shall be unknown; that men will not think it is Him; that He shall be "a stone of stumbling, against which many shall fall;" &c.

It was to make the Messiah known to the good, and unknown to the wicked, that God caused Him to be so foretold. For had the manner of His appearance been clearly described, there would not have been any obscurity, even to wicked men. And if the time had been obscurely predicted, even good men would have felt themselves in darkness. For the integrity of their heart could not have taught them, for example, that a ▭ signified six hundred years. The time, therefore, was clearly declared; and the manner only in figure.

By this means the wicked, apprehending that the blessings promised were temporal, were deceived, notwithstanding the clear predictions of the time; while the righteous were not deceived; for the sense in which the promised blessings are understood, depends on the heart, which calls that good which it loves; but the interpretation of the promised time does not depend on the heart. And thus the clear prediction of the time, and the obscure prediction of the blessings, could mislead none but the wicked.

What must the Messiah have been, seeing that in Him the sceptre was eternally to continue with Judah; and that, at His coming, the sceptre was to be taken from Judah? "That seeing, they should not see; and understanding, they should not understand[b]." Nothing could have been more complete.

Instead of complaining that God is concealed, we

[b] Isa. vi. 9.

ought to give Him thanks that He has so clearly revealed Himself; and to give Him thanks also, that He still hides Himself from the wise and the proud, who are unworthy to know so holy a God.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament is intermixed with so many things of little consequence, that we can scarcely distinguish it. Had Moses kept no other register but that of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, it would have been too conspicuous; but even now, by careful inspection, we may trace it in Thamar, Ruth, &c.

The most apparent defects are of force with persons of discernment. For instance: the two genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke; it being manifest that they could not have been drawn out in concert.

Let not men, therefore, reproach us with want of light: for we ourselves profess to want it. But let them own the truth of religion in its very obscurity, in the imperfection of the light which surrounds us, and that indifference which is in men about knowing it.

Were there but one religion, God would be too conspicuous: and so likewise if there were martyrs in no other religion than our own.

Jesus Christ, to leave the impious in their blindness, never told them that He was not of Nazareth, or that He was not the son of Joseph.

As Jesus Christ remained unknown amongst men, so truth remains amongst other opinions, undistinguished by their external appearance.

If the mercy of God be so great as savingly to instruct us, even while He hides Himself from us, what light may we not expect, when He shall please to unveil His perfections?

We can understand nothing of the works of God, if we do not take it as a principle, that He blinds some while He illuminates others.

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT TRUE CHRISTIANS AND TRUE JEWS HAVE BUT ONE AND THE SAME RELIGION.

THE Jewish Religion seems essentially to consist in the paternity of Abraham, the rite of circumcision, the sacrifices, the ceremonies, the ark, the temple at Jerusalem, and, in short, in the law and the covenant of Moses.

I affirm, however, that it consisted in neither of these, but in the love of God alone; and that God rejected every thing without this.

That God bore no manner of regard to the carnal Israel who descended from Abraham.

That the Jews were to be punished by God like strangers, if they provoked His displeasure. "And it shall be, that if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods; I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish; as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish[a]."

That strangers, if they loved God, should be accepted by Him as the Jews.

That the true Jews would ascribe all their merit to God, and not to Abraham. "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer[b]."

Moses himself assured them that God was no accepter of persons. "God," says he, "regardeth not persons, nor taketh rewards[c]."

I affirm that the circumcision enjoined was that of the heart. "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more

[a] Deut. viii. 19, 20. [b] Isa. lxiii. 16. [c] Deut. x. 17.

stiff-necked. For the Lord your God is a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, who regardeth not persons[d]," &c.

That God promised to bestow on them this grace. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart[e]."

That the uncircumcised in heart shall be judged of God. "I will punish them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart[f]."

I add, that circumcision was a figure, instituted to distinguish the Jews from all other nations[g]. And this was the reason that it was not performed in the wilderness, because there was then no danger of their mixing with strangers; and since Jesus Christ has come it is no longer necessary.

That the love of God is every where enforced: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life[h]."

It is said that the Jews, for want of this love of God, should be rejected on account of their crimes, and the gentiles admitted in their stead. "I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities, and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation[i]."

[d] Deut. x. 16, 17; Jer. iv. 4. [e] Deut. xxx. 6. [f] Jer. ix. 25, 26.
[g] Gen. xvii. 10. [h] Deut. xxx. 19, 20. [i] Deut. xxxii. 20, 21.

That temporal blessings are fallacious, and that the only true good is to be united to God[k].

That their festivals and sacrifices were displeasing to God[l]. Not only those of the wicked Jews; but He even took no pleasure in those of the good, as appears from the fiftieth Psalm, where, before the wicked are peculiarly addressed in those words, "To the wicked God saith[m]," &c, it is declared that God has no regard to the sacrifices or the blood of beasts.

That the offerings of the Gentiles should be accepted by God, and that He should withdraw His approbation from the offerings of the Jews[n].

That God would make a new covenant by the Messiah, and that the old covenant should be annulled[o].

That the old things should be forgotten[p].

That the ark should no more come to mind[q].

That the temple should be rejected[r].

That the sacrifices should be abolished, and purer sacrifices established[s].

That the Aaronical order of priesthood should be set aside, and the order of Melchisedec introduced by the Messiah, and that this priesthood should be everlasting[t].

That Jerusalem should be cast off, and a new name given to the people, which should be more excellent than that of Jews, and of eternal duration[u].

That the Jews should be without prophets, without kings, without sacrifices, and without an altar; and should nevertheless subsist as a distinct people[x].

[k] Ps. lxxiii. 27. [l] Isa. lxvi. 3; Jer. vi. 20. [m] v. 16. [n] Mal. i. 11; Hos. vi. 6. [o] Jer. xxxi. 31. [p] Isa. xliii. 18. [q] Jer. iii. 16. [r] Jer. vii. 14. [s] Mal. i. 10. [t] Ps. cx. 4. [u] Isa. vi. 11, 12; lvi. 3, 5. [x] Hos. iii. 4; Jer. xxxi. 37.

CHAPTER XX.

THAT GOD CANNOT BE SAVINGLY KNOWN BUT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Most of those who undertake to demonstrate the divine Being to ungodly persons, commonly begin with the works of nature, and they very rarely succeed. I do not mean to dispute the validity of these proofs, which are consecrated by the holy Scripture: they are conformable to reason; but very often they are not suited and proportioned to that disposition of mind which prevails in those for whom they are intended.

For we must observe that such discourses are not addressed to men who have a lively faith in their hearts, and who immediately discern that every thing which exists is no more than the work of that God whom they adore. To these all nature proclaims its Author, and the heavens declare the glory of God. But as for those in whom this light is extinct, and in whom we endeavour to revive it, who are destitute of faith and charity, and who behold nothing but darkness and obscurity in nature, it does not seem the proper way to convert them, to point out to them, as proofs on this important subject, nothing more than the course of the moon, or the planets, or common arguments, against which they have constantly hardened themselves. The obduracy of their minds renders them deaf to this voice of nature, which has sounded continually in their ears; and experience shews, that so far from convincing them by this method, nothing is so likely to discourage them, and to make them despair of ever finding the truth, as to undertake to persuade them by this mode of reasoning, and to tell them that they must clearly see the truth of it.

It is not in this manner the Scripture speaks, which knows so much better than we do the things which are of God. It informs us, indeed, that the beauty of the creatures makes known Him who is their Author; but it does not tell us that it does this to all persons in the world. On the contrary, it declares that whenever they do it, it is not by themselves, but by that light which God sheds abroad into the hearts of those to whom He discovers Himself by their means. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it to them[a]." It teaches us, in general, that God is an invisible God. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself[b]." And that since the corruption of human nature He has left men in a state of blindness, from which they can only be delivered by Jesus Christ, without whom we are cut off from all communion with God. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him[c]."

The Scripture also points this out to us, when it tells us, in so many places, that those who seek God find Him; for we do not speak thus of a thing which is evident and clear; men do not search after that—it discovers itself, and compels observation.

The metaphysical proofs of a God are so very intricate, and abstracted from the common reasonings of men, that they strike them with but little force; and when they do affect some, it is only for the moment in which they discern the demonstration; but the very next hour they suspect they are deceived: "Quod curiositate cognoverant superbia amiserunt."

Moreover, arguments of this kind can only lead us to a speculative knowledge of God; and to know Him only thus, is, in fact, not to know Him at all.

The Deity of Christians is not merely a God who is

[a] Rom. i. 19. [b] Isa. xlv. 15. [c] Matt. xi. 27.

the Author of geometrical truths, and of the order of the elements: that is the divinity of the pagans. Nor is He merely a God who overrules by His providence the lives and fortunes of men, in order to give those who worship Him a happy series of years: this was the portion of the Jews. But the God of Abraham and of Jacob, the God of the Christians, is a God of love and consolation; a God who fills the soul and the heart which He possesses; gives it an inward feeling of its own misery, and of His infinite mercy; unites Himself to the soul, replenishing it with humility and joy, with confidence and love; and renders it incapable of fixing on any thing but Himself, as its ultimate object.

The God of the Christians is a God who makes the soul perceive that He is its only good; that its only rest is in Him; that it can have no joy but in His love; and at the same time He causes it to abhor those obstacles which hinder and withhold it from loving Him with all its strength. Self-love and concupiscence, which do this, are insupportable to it. God makes it feel that there is this self-love deeply rooted within it, and that He alone can remove it.

This it is to know God as a Christian. But to know Him in this manner we must, at the same time, know our own misery and unworthiness, and the need we have of a mediator in order to draw nigh to God and unite ourselves to Him. We must never separate these truths, because either by itself is not only unprofitable but hurtful. The knowledge of God, without the knowledge of our own misery, produces pride. The knowledge of our own misery, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, produces despair. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ exempts us both from pride and despair; because in Him we see God, our own misery, and the only way of recovery from it.

We may know God without knowing our own miseries, or our own miseries without knowing God; or we may know both, without knowing the means of deliverance from the miseries which oppress us. But we cannot know Jesus Christ without at the same time knowing God, our own miseries, and the remedy for them: because Jesus Christ is not only God, but He is God the Healer of our miseries.

Thus all who seek God without Jesus Christ find no light which can afford them satisfaction, or be really profitable to them. For either they do not go far enough to know that there is a God; or if they do, it is of no use to them, because they frame to themselves a way of communicating without a mediator, with that God whom they have discovered without a mediator: so that they either fall into atheism or deism, two things which the Christian religion almost equally abhors.

We ought, therefore, wholly to direct our enquiries to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, since it is by Him alone that we can hope to know God in a manner that shall be really advantageous to us.

He is the true God to us men; that is, to miserable and sinful creatures: He is the centre of all, and the object of all. He who knows not Him, knows nothing either in the order of the world, or in himself. For not only do we know nothing of God but by Jesus Christ; but we know nothing of ourselves also but by Jesus Christ alone.

Without Jesus Christ man must remain in vice and in misery: with Jesus Christ man is released from vice and from misery also. In Him is all our happiness, our virtue, our life, our light, our hope; and out of Him there is nothing but vice, misery, darkness, despair; nothing but confusion appears in the nature of God, or in the nature of man.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SURPRISING CONTRARIETIES IN THE NATURE OF MAN, WITH REGARD TO TRUTH, HAPPINESS, AND VARIOUS OTHER THINGS.

NOTHING is more astonishing in the nature of man than the contrarieties which are observable in him, with regard to every subject. He is made for the knowledge of truth; he ardently desires and pursues it; and yet, when he endeavours to lay hold on it, he so dazzles and confounds himself, that he makes it doubtful whether he has actually attained it. This gave rise to the two sects, of Pyrrhonians, and Dogmatists; of which one endeavoured utterly to deprive men of all knowledge of truth; while the other endeavoured infallibly to assure him of it: but each with reasons so improbable, that they only increase our confusion and perplexity, as long as we continue without any other light than that which we find in ourselves.

The principal arguments of the Pyrrhonians, or Sceptics, are as follow. That we have no other certainty of the truth of any principles (if we except faith and revelation) than that we naturally feel them within ourselves. But this natural perception of them is no convincing evidence of their truth; because, since without faith we have no assurance whether man was created by a good God, or by some evil demon; whether he has existed from eternity, or been the offspring of chance: it may be doubted whether these principles which have been given us are true, or false, or uncertain; this depending on the nature of our origin. Further, that no

person can tell, except by faith, whether he is asleep or awake; because in our sleep we as strongly fancy ourselves to be awake as when we really are so: we imagine that we see space, figure, and motion: we perceive the time pass away; we calculate it; in short, we act as if we were awake. Therefore, as by our own confession, one half of our life is spent in sleep, during which, whatever we may suppose, we have no notion of truth, all our ideas being mere illusions, who can tell but the other half of our life, in which we think ourselves awake, is not also a sleep, a little different from the former, from which we awake when we think ourselves asleep, as we sometimes dream that we dream, heaping one reverie upon another.

I leave the declamations of the same sect against the impressions of custom, education, manners, countries, and other such things which govern the greatest part of mankind, who form their opinions on no other foundation.

The only fort of the Dogmatists is this, that, if we speak honestly and sincerely, no man can doubt of natural principles. We have a knowledge of truth, say they, not only by reasoning, but by intuition, and by a clear and vivid intelligence; and it is in this way that we attain our knowledge of first principles. It is therefore in vain for reason, which has no share in producing them, to attempt to attack them. The Sceptics, who make this their object, are labouring totally in vain. We know when we are awake, however unable we may be to demonstrate it by reasoning. This inabilty shews nothing more than the feebleness of our rational powers, but not the uncertainty of all our knowledge, as they pretend. For the knowledge of first principles, as, for instance, that there are such things as space, time, motion, number, matter, is as certain

as any with which our reasonings furnish us. Nay, it is upon this knowledge, by perception and intuition that reason must rest, and found all its procedures. I preceive that there are three dimensions in space, and that number is infinite; and my reason afterward demonstrates, that there are no two square numbers assignable, one of which is exactly double the other. We perceive principles, and we conclude propositions: and both with equal certainty, though by different ways. And it is as ridiculous for reason to demand of perception and intelligence a demonstration of these first principles before it consents to them, as it would be for the intellect to demand of reason a clear intuition of the propositions it demonstrates. This inability, therefore, can only serve to humble reason, which wants to be the judge of every thing; but not at all to diminish our certainty, as if nothing but reason were capable of instructing us. Would to God, that, on the contrary, we had no occasion for it at all, and that we knew every thing by instinct and intuition. But nature has denied us this favour, and allows us but little knowledge of this sort; all the rest we must acquire by reasoning.

Here then is open war among men. We must all enlist on one side or the other; for he that thinks to stand neuter is most effectually a Pyrrhonian: this neutrality is the very essence of Pyrrhonism; he who is not against them must be in a superlative manner for them. What shall a man do in this situation? Shall he doubt of every thing? Shall he doubt whether he is awake, whether another pinches him or burns him? Shall he doubt whether he doubts? Shall he doubt whether he exists? It seems impossible to come to this; and therefore I take it for granted, that there never was a complete and absolute

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sceptic. Nature sustains the weakness of reason, and keeps it from this degree of extravagance: but shall a man say, on the contrary, that he is in sure possession of truth; he who, if you press him ever so little, can produce no title to belief, and is obliged to quit his hold?

Who shall unravel this perplexity? Nature confutes the Pyrrhonians; reason, the Dogmatists. What will then become of thee, O man, who art seeking the knowledge of thine own condition by thy natural reason? Thou canst neither avoid both these sects, nor continue in either!

Such is man, with regard to truth. Let us now consider him with respect to felicity, which he seeks with so much earnestness through the whole of his actions: for all men desire to be happy; this is a rule without exception. How different soever may be the means they employ, all have the same end in view. That which makes one man go to the wars, and that which makes another stay away, is the same desire, attended in each with different views. The will never stirs the least step but toward this object. It is the motive of all the actions of all men, not excepting even those who hang and destroy themselves.

And yet, after so many ages, no person without faith has ever arrived at this point, toward which all are continually tending. Every body is discontented; princes, subjects, nobles, beggars, the old, the young, the strong, the weak, the learned, the ignorant, the healthy, the sick, of all countries, of all times, of all ages, and of all conditions.

So long, so constant, and uniform a proof, ought fully to convince us of our own inability to arrive at happiness by our own endeavours. But example does not teach us; it is never so perfectly parallel as to be without some trifling difference, which leads us to expect that we shall not be

deceived on the next occasion, as we were on the last. Thus the present never satisfying us, hope urges us on from misfortune to misfortune, till at last it leads us to death, the sum of misery without end.

It is truly astonishing, that there should not be any one thing in nature which has not at some time been looked to, to fill the place of the last end and happiness of man; stars, elements, plants, animals, insects, diseases, wars, vices, crimes. Man being fallen from his natural state, there is nothing so extravagant as to be incapable of attracting him. Ever since he lost his real good, every thing cheats him with the appearance of it; not excepting even the destruction of himself, contrary as it is both to reason and nature together.

Some have sought for happiness in authority, others in curiosities and the sciences, and others in pleasure. These three passions have produced three sects; and those whom we call philosophers, have really done nothing else but follow one of the three. Such amongst them as approached nearest to the truth, considered that the universal good which all men desire, and in which each should have a portion, could not consist in any peculiar thing which can be in the possession of one person alone, and which, if it were divided, would more grieve him who might possess it, for want of the part he has not, than it could gratify him by the enjoyment of the part which he has. They saw that the true good must be something which all may possess at once, without diminution or envy; and which no man can be deprived of against his will. They understood this; but they were unable to find it; and instead of solid and substantial good, they at last embraced the empty shadow of a chimerical virtue.

Our instinct makes us feel that we ought to seek

our happiness within ourselves. Our passions hurry us abroad, even when no objects present themselves to excite them; and external objects are themselves our tempters, and attract us even when we are not thinking about them. Therefore, though philosophers should weary themselves with crying, "Enter into yourselves, your real felicity is within you," people give them no credit; and those who do are the more unsatisfied and ridiculous on that account: for what is there more vain and ridiculous than that which the Stoics call happiness, or more false than the reasonings from which they deduce it?

They conclude that what has been done once may always be done; and that, because the desire of glory sometimes makes those who possess it perform actions which are praiseworthy, others may also do the same. But those are feverish exertions, which health cannot imitate.

The internal contest between reason and the passions has occasioned those who were desirous of peace to become divided into sects. Some were for renouncing their passions, and becoming gods; and others for renouncing their reason, and becoming beasts. But neither of them could do either the one or the other. Reason still remains to censure the baseness and injustice of the passions, and to disturb the repose of those who gave themselves up to them: and the passions still remain alive, even in those who pretend to renounce them.

This then is the account of what man can accomplish by himself and his own efforts, both with regard to truth and to happiness. We have an idea of truth, not to be effaced by the sceptic; we have an incapacity of argument, not to be rectified by the dogmatist. We wish for truth, and find nothing in ourselves but uncertainty.

We seek after happiness, and find nothing but misery. We are incapable of ceasing to wish both for happiness and truth, and yet are incapable of procuring either certainty or felicity. This desire is left in us, partly as a punishment, and partly as an indication from whence we are fallen.

If man was not made for God, how is it that he can only be happy in God? And if he is made for God, how is he so opposite to God?

Man cannot tell where he is to place himself. He is unquestionably out of his way, and feels within himself the remains of a happy state, from whence he is fallen, and which he is unable to recover. He is ever seeking after it with earnestness, but without success, encompassed with impenetrable darkness.

Hence arose the disputes of the philosophers: some taking upon them to elevate man, by displaying his greatness, and others to depress him, by representing his misery. And what seems more strange, is that each party employed the argument of the other to strengthen its own opinion. For the misery of man may be inferred from his greatness, and his greatness may be inferred from his misery. Thus one sect more clearly demonstrated his misery, by deducing it from his greatness; and another more forcibly demonstrated his greatness, because they inferred it from his misery. Whatever one party adduced in proof of his greatness, served as an argument for the other to demonstrate his misery; because the greater the height from whence we have fallen, the greater is the calamity of having fallen, and *vice versa*. So that each became uppermost by turns, revolving in an endless circle of dispute; for it is certain that the greater the degree of light men enjoy, the more will they discern in man, both of misery and of greatness.

In a word, man knows himself to be miserable; he is therefore miserable, because he knows it: but he is likewise eminently great, because he is conscious of his misery.

What a chimæra then is man! What a novelty! What a chaos! What a subject of contradiction! A judge of every thing, and yet a feeble worm of the earth; the depository of truth, and yet a mere heap of uncertainty; the glory and the outcast of the universe. If he boasts, I humble him; if he humbles himself, I boast of him; and always contradict him, till he is brought to comprehend that he is an incomprehensible monster.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF MAN.

The first thing which offers itself to man, when he reflects on himself, is his body: that is to say, a certain portion of matter which is appropriated to him. But in order to understand what this is, he must compare it with all that is above him, or below him, in order to determine its just bounds.

Let him not therefore content himself with the sight of those objects which immediately surround him. Let him contemplate all nature, in its noble and perfect majesty. Let him consider that glorious luxuriancy, which is set as an eternal lamp to enlighten the universe. Let him consider that this earth is only a point, compared with the vast circuit which that luminary describes. And let him remark with astonishment, that this vast circuit itself is but a point, compared with that of the stars which revolve in the firmament. But if his sight be limited here, let his imagi-

nation go further still. It will sooner be weary with conceiving than nature with supplying his conceptions. All that we see of the universe is no more than an imperceptible trait in the ample bosom of nature. No idea can reach the extent of her space. Let us swell our conceptions as much as we will, we bring forth nothing but atoms, in comparison with the reality of things. This is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere. In a word, it is one of the greatest sensible characters of the omnipotence of God, that our imagination is lost in the thought.

When man returns again to himself, let him consider what he is, compared with the whole that exists. Let him look on himself as wandering in this bye-corner of nature; and from what he sees of this little dungeon in which he is lodged, that is to say, this world, let him learn to estimate the earth, its kingdoms, its cities, and himself, at their proper value.

What is one man in this infinity of being? Who can perceive him? But to shew him another prodigy no less astonishing, let him look into what appears to him the minutest of objects. Let a mite, for instance, shew him in its little diminutive body parts incomparably more minute; legs with joints, veins in those legs, blood in those veins, humours in that blood, drops in those humours, vapours in those drops. Let him divide these vapours till his powers and his conceptions are exhausted, and let the last particle which he has imagined, be the subject of our discourse. He will probably suppose that this is the ultimate minutia in nature: but even in this I will shew him a new abyss. I will delineate to him not only the visible universe, but all that he is able to conceive in the immensity of nature, in the circumference of that imperceptible atom. Here

let him behold an infinity of worlds, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world, and on this earth, other animals, and at length mites again, in which he shall also find what he found in the first, and others again in them, without end or cessation. Let him lose himself in these wonders, as surprising by their minuteness as the former by their extent. And who will not be surprised to consider that his body, which was just now imperceptible in the universe, which universe itself was imperceptible in the bosom of universal being, should now become a colossus, a world, or rather an universe, compared with that ultimate minuteness to which we can never arrive.

He that shall reflect on himself thus, will, no doubt, be affrighted to find himself, as it were suspended, as to the portion of matter allotted him, between the two abysses of infinity and nothing, from which he is equally removed. He will tremble at the sight of these wonders; and I think that his curiosity changing into admiration, he will be more inclined to contemplate them in silence than to investigate them with presumption.

For, after all, what is man in nature? A nothing before infinity, an universe before nothing; a medium between the two. He is infinitely distant from both extremes, and his being is no less distant from that nothing from which he was taken, than from that infinity in which he is swallowed up.

His understanding holds the same rank in the order of intelligent beings as his body in the material system; and all that it can do is only to discern some appearances of the middle of things, under perpetual despair of comprehending either their beginning or their end. All things have arisen from nothing, and are tending to infinity. Who can follow such an astonish-

ing progress? None but the Author of these wonders is able to comprehend them.

This middle state betwixt two extremes is common to all our faculties. Our senses can bear nothing extreme: too loud a sound makes us deaf; too strong a light makes us blind; too great a distance, or too great nearness, alike prevent us from seeing; too much prolixity, or too much brevity, render a discourse obscure; too much pleasure incommodes us; too much uniformity of sound disgusts us. We are not capable of feeling either the most intense heat, or the most extreme cold. Any qualities in excess are inimical to us, and not perceivable; we do not feel, we only suffer them. Childhood and old age alike incapacitate the mind; too much or too little food disturbs it in its actions; too much or too little instruction renders it stupid. Things in extreme are to us as if they were not, and we are as nothing with respect to them: either we escape them, or they escape us.

This is our real condition. This confines all our attainments within certain limits, which we never pass; incapable both of knowing everything, and of being ignorant of everything. We are placed on a wide medium, always uncertain, and floating between ignorance and knowledge; and if we endeavour to go further, the object we have in view grows unsteady, escapes our hold, hides itself from us, and vanishes in an eternal flight, which nothing can restrain.

This is our natural condition, and yet that which is the most opposite to our inclination. We burn with a desire to search into every thing, and to build a tower which shall reach to infinity; but soon the whole edifice crumbles to pieces, and the earth opens, and swallows it up.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GREATNESS OF MAN.

I CAN easily conceive a man without hands and without feet; and I could conceive him too without a head, if I did not learn from experience that it is by means of this he thinks. Thought, therefore, constitutes the essence of man, without which we can have no conception of him.

What is that in us which is sensible of pleasure? Is it the hand? Is it the arm? Is it the flesh? Is it the blood?—We shall find tha it must be something immaterial.

Man is so great that his greatness appears in his knowing himself to be miserable. A tree is not conscious of misery. It is true, that to know oneself to be miserable is really to be miserable; but there is still something great in a consciousness of misery. Thus all his miseries prove his greatness. They are the miseries of a noble lord; the miseries of a king that has been dethroned.

Who thinks himself unhappy in not being a king, except a deposed king? Was Paulus Æmilius unhappy in not being consul any longer? On the contrary, every body perceived he was happy in having gone through that office, because it was not a condition in which he was always to remain. But Perseus was so extremely miserable in not being longer a king, because he ought always to have continued so, that it was thought strange he could bear even to live. Who thinks himself unhappy in having but one mouth? Who would not reckon himself unfortunate in having but one eye? No man, perhaps, ever thought of lamenting that he had not three eyes; but any man would be inconsolable for the loss of one.

We have so great an idea

of the human soul, that we cannot bear to be despised by it, or to be without its esteem. All the happiness of mankind consists in this esteem.

If, on the one hand, the false glory which men pursue is a strong proof of their misery and their meanness, it is, on the other hand, an equal proof of their excellence. For whatever earthly possessions men have, whatever health and accommodations they enjoy, they are still dissatisfied, if other men do not esteem them. They set so high a value on the reason of man, that whatever worldly advantages they possess, they think themselves unhappy, if they do not stand to advantage in the judgment of others. This is the best situation a man can hold. Nothing can prevent him from desiring it; and this is the most indelible character of the heart of man; insomuch that those who think most contemptuously of mankind, and level them with beasts, would even be admired for so doing, and thus contradict themselves by their own desires. Nature, which is stronger than all their reason, convincing them more forcibly of the greatness of man than reason can do of his meanness.

Man is but a reed, and the weakest in nature; but then he is a thinking reed. There is no occasion that the whole universe should arm itself to destroy him; a vapour, a drop of water, is sufficient to kill him. But should the whole universe conspire to crush him, he would still be more noble than that which destroys him, because he knows that he dies; while the universe would be insensible of its victory over him.

Thus the whole of our dignity consists in thought: It is by this we are to elevate ourselves, and not by mere space and duration. Let us then labour to think well: this is the principle of morality.

It is dangerous to shew man how much he resem-

bles the beasts, without shewing him his greatness. It is dangerous to shew him his excellence, without shewing him his meanness. And the greatest danger of all is to leave him ignorant of both. But it is highly beneficial to him to have a knowledge of both.

Let man then set a just value on himself. Let him love himself, because he has in him a nature capable of good; but let him not on that account love the weaknesses of that nature. Let him despise himself, because his capacity is unfilled; but let him not on that account despise his natural capacity. Let him hate himself; let him love himself. He possesses a capacity for the knowledge of the truth, and for happiness, but he is not in possession of any truth that is permanent or satisfactory. I would therefore lead him to desire to find it, to be ready and disengaged from his passions, that he may follow it wherever he may meet with it. And knowing how much his knowledge is obscured by his passions, I would have him hate in himself that concupiscence which so biasses his judgment, that it may neither blind him in making his choice, nor divert him from it after it is made.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE VANITY OF MAN.

We are not satisfied with the life we have in ourselves, and in our own being; we wish to live an imaginary life in the idea of others; and hence we strive to make some appearance. We labour incessantly to embellish and retain this fictitious being, while we neglect the real one. And if we possess either tranquillity, or generosity, or fidelity, we are

anxious to make it known, that we may attach these virtues to this being of the imagination. We would even deprive ourselves of them, for the sake of being thought to possess them, and willingly turn cowards to have the reputation of being valiant. A strong mark this of the nullity of our proper being, that we cannot be satisfied in it, without the other, and very often renounce it for the other; for he that would not die to preserve his honour becomes infamous on that account.

The charm of glory is so great, that, join it to whatever you will, even to death itself, it appears lovely.

Pride is a counterpoise to all our miseries; because it either conceals them, or, if it exposes them, it glories in the discovery.

Pride has so natural a possession of us, amidst all our miseries and errors, that men lose even life with joy, if they know it will be talked of.

Vanity has so rooted itself in the heart of man, that a scullion, a hodman, a porter, will vaunt of himself, and wants to have his admirers. And philosophers themselves want the same. Those who write against glory, would have the glory of having written well against it; and those who read their compositions, would have the glory of having read them. And I who am writing this perhaps feel the same wish; and perhaps those who read what I write will feel it likewise.

Notwithstanding a sight of all the miseries which touch us, and seize us, as it were, by the throat, we have still an insuperable instinct which lifts us up.

We are so presumptuous that we desire to be known to all the world, and even to those who shall come after us, when we are no more; and we are so vain, that the esteem of five or six persons who are round about us, is enough to amuse and content us.

The most important thing in life is the choice of a

profession; and yet this is left to mere chance. Custom makes masons, soldiers, upholsterers, &c. He is an excellent upholsterer, says one; and, oh! what fools are the soldiers, says another! Others, on the contrary, cry out, there is nothing so great as the wars; and all men are poor creatures but soldiers. By merely hearing in our infancy some arts commended, and others despised, we determine our choice; for we naturally love excellence, and hate imprudence. These words affect us, and we only err in applying them. So great is the power of custom, that there are whole countries which consist of mechanics; and others of soldiers. Nature can never be thus uniform. It is custom, therefore, which does this, and carries nature along with it. Yet, sometimes again, nature will prevail, and keep men under its instinct, in spite of all custom, either good or bad.

Curiosity is nothing but vanity. For the most part, we desire to know things merely that we may talk of them. A man would not undertake a voyage by sea for the bare pleasure of gratifying his sight, if he was never to speak of it, and had no hope of conversing about it afterward.

We do not much care about being esteemed in towns which we only pass through, but when we are going to stay in them any time we are solicitious for it. How much time will this take? A time proportioned to our vain and transitory stay?

A little thing comforts us, because a little thin afflicts us.

We are never satisfied with the present. We anticipate the future as too slow, and, as it were, to hasten it on; or we recall the time past, as too swift, in order to stop its flight. We are so imprudent, that we ramble through those times with which we have nothing to do, and utterly forget that which alone is

our own; and so vain, that we dream of those which are not, and let the only one which subsists pass away without reflection. This is because the present, generally, gives us some uneasiness; we hide it from our sight because it distresses us; and if it happen to be agreeable, we are distressed to see it so quickly pass away. We endeavour to retain it by means of the future, and think about disposing of things which are not in our power, for a time to which we have no assurance whatever that we shall ever arrive.

Let a man examine his own thoughts, and he will always find them employed about the time past, or to come. We scarcely bestow a thought upon the present; or, if we do, it is only that we may borrow light from it to dispose of the future. The present is never in our view; the past and the present are our means, but the future alone is our object. Thus we never live, but we hope to live; and being thus ever preparing to be happy, it is most certain we never shall be so, if we do not aspire to some other felicity than can ever be enjoyed in this life.

Our imagination so magnifies the time present, by reflecting perpetually on it, and so weakens the idea of eternity, by scarcely ever thinking about it, that we make a nothing of eternity, and an eternity of nothing. And the root of all this is so predominant in us, that all our reason is too weak to surmount it.

Cromwell was going to desolate all Christendom; the royal family would have been ruined, and his own have been established in power, but for a little particle of gravel which fell down into his ureter. Rome itself began to tremble under him; but this petty grain, which had been nothing anywhere else, coming into this part, occasioned his death, the fall of his family, and the restoration of the king.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WEAKNESS OF MAN.

THERE is nothing which astonishes me so much as to see that all the world are not astonished at their own weakness. Men act seriously, and every one follows his own course of life, not because it is really good to follow it, or that it is the fashion, but as if each man knew exactly what is reason and justice.

We find ourselves deceived every moment, and by a pleasant kind of humility we think the fault is in ourselves, and not in the art which we always boast of understanding. It is fit there should be many such persons in the world, to shew that man is capable of the most extravagant opinions, since he is capable of believing that the weakness he feels is not natural and inevitable, but that on the contrary he is naturally wise.

The weakness of human reason appears much more in those who are ignorant of it than in those who are acquainted with it.

While we are too young we judge amiss, and when we are too old we do the same. If we think too little of a thing, or too much, we turn giddy, and are unable to discover the truth.

If a man views his own work, just after he has finished it, he is quite prepossessed in its favour: but if he waits too long, he scarcely enters into the subject of it.

There is but one precise point from which we can take a just view of a picture; the rest are too near, or too distant; too high, or too low. Perspective assigns this point in the art of painting; but who is able to determine it in Truth and in Morals?

That mistress of mistake, which we call fancy or opinion, is so much the greater cheat, because she

does not cheat constantly. She would be an infallible rule of truth, if she were an infallible rule of falsehood. But as she most commonly deceives us, she gives us no mark by which we can go, but stamps truth and falsehood with the same impression.

This proud princess, the enemy of reason, who is so well pleased to control and rule over her, in order to shew how much she can govern every thing, has established in man a second nature. She has her happy and her unhappy, her sick and her healthy, her rich and her poor, her fools and her wise; and nothing is so vexatious as to see that she fills her votaries with more complete and entire satisfaction than reason can do. The imaginary wise always feeling quite a different degree of pleasure to any which the truly wise can reasonably enjoy. They look on other people with authority; they dispute with assurance and confidence, while the others feel modest and diffident. And their gaiety of countenance often gives them an advantage in the opinion of their hearers; so much favour do the imaginary wise find with judges of their own description. Opinion cannot, indeed, make fools wise; but it makes them contented, and so maintains the contest with reason, which can only render its friends miserable. The one covers them with glory, the other with shame.

What dispenses reputation, what procures respect and veneration to persons, to books, to the great, but opinion? How insufficient are all riches in the world without its concurrence!

Opinion disposes of every thing. It denominates beauty, justice, and happiness, which are all the world can afford. I should be very glad to see an Italian book, of which I know only the title, which is itself worth a multitude of books. *Della Opinione Regina del Mundo:* "Of Opinion, the Queen of the World." I subscribe

to this without knowing it, if there be no evil cloaked under this title.

There is scarcely any thing, just or unjust, which does not change its nature on changing its climate. Three degrees of elevation in the pole overturn all jurisprudence. The meridian determines a truth, and a few years a right to possession. Fundamental laws vary. Right has its dates. Fine justice this, which is bounded by a river or a mountain! Truth on one side of the Pyrenees is falsehood on the other.

The art of overturning states is to discredit established customs, by looking into their origin, and pointing out that it was defective in authority and justice. We ought, say you, to go back to the primitive and fundamental laws of the state, which unjust customs have abolished. This is the sure way to overset every thing. Nothing is right in such a balance: yet the multitude lend an ear to such discourses; they shake off the yoke as soon as ever they begin to feel it; and the great take advantage of it, to ruin both them, and these curious examiners into established customs. But by a contrary fault, men think they may do with justice whatever is not without example.

Set the greatest philosopher in the world upon a plank only a little broader than the space he usually takes up in walking, if there be a precipice underneath, although his reason may convince him he is safe, his imagination will get the better of him. Some could not even bear the thought, without sweating and turning pale. I will not enumerate all the effects such a situation might produce. Every one knows the sight of a cat, or of a rat, or treading upon a coal, will entirely unhinge the reason of some people.

Would you not say that yon magistrate, whose venerable age commands the respect of the whole nation, governs himself by wisdom,

pure and sublime; that he judges of things by their real nature, without being moved by those trifling circumstances which only influence the imagination of the weak? Behold him enter the court where he is to administer justice; see him prepare with exemplary gravity for a hearing.—Let a counsel come in, to whom nature has given an untunable voice, or a comical face, if his barber has but half shaved him, or if some accident has well splashed him, I dare lay a wager the magistrate loses his gravity.

The soul of the greatest man living is not so independent, but it is liable to be disturbed by the least bustling about him. You need not let off a cannon to break the train of his thought: the noise of a weather-cock, or of a pully, will do it. Do not be surprised if you hear him argue a little incoherently at present; he has a fly buzzing at his ears, and that is enough to make him deaf to good counsel. If you would have him informed of the truth, you must drive away this animal, which holds his reason in check, and discomposes that wonderful intellect, which governs cities and kingdoms.

The will is one of the principal instruments of belief; not that it produces belief, but because things appear either true or false, according to the light in which we view them. The will, which likes one point of view better than another, turns off the mind from considering those qualities which it dislikes, and thus the understanding, keeping pace with the will, it stops to look on the appearance that pleases it, and judging by what it sees, it insensibly regulates its belief by the inclination of the will.

Diseases are another source of error. They impair our judgment and our senses. And if violent ones produce a sensible alteration in them, I have no doubt but lesser ones have a proportional effect.

Self-interest is also a

wonderful instrument for agreeably putting out our eyes. Affection or dislike will overturn justice. How well does a counsellor, retained with a large fee, find the justice of the cause he is defending improve! Yet I have known men who, through a contrary fantasticalness of mind, have, in order to avoid falling into this self-love, been guilty of the highest injustice in the other extreme. The sure way to lose a cause the most just in itself, was to get it recommended to them by some of their nearest relations.

Imagination often magnifies the most trifling objects, by giving them such a chimerical value, that our minds are completely filled by them; and by an insolent temerity, it diminishes the greatest, to make them come within our measure.

Truth and justice are two points so very fine, that our instruments are too dull to touch them with exactness. If they reach them, they either slip over the point, or get all on one side it, more near to the wrong than the right.

It is not merely old impressions that are capable of misleading us. The charms of novelty have the same power: and hence arise all the disputes amongst men, who charge each other either with following the false impressions they have received from their childhood, or with rashly running after new ones.

Who keeps the just medium? Let him come forward and prove it. There is no principle, how natural soever it may be, even from our infancy, but may be made to pass for a false impression, either from education or of the senses. Because, says one, you have thought from your infancy that a vessel was empty when you saw nothing in it, you have believed the possibility of a vacuum. This is only a strong illusion of your senses, strengthened by custom, which science will correct. While others say, on the other

hand, because they have told you in the schools that there is no such thing as a vacuum, they have vitiated your common sense, which easily admitted it before they made this evil impression, which you must therefore correct, by returning to the dictates of nature. Which then has deceived us, our senses or our education?

The whole employment of men is to get property; and yet the title by which they hold it has nothing for its origin but the fancy of the legislature. But after all they have no power to keep possession of it in security; a thousand accidents may deprive them of it. It is the same with knowledge; a fit of sickness may deprive us of it.

Man, therefore, is nothing but the subject of indelible errors, without grace. Nothing shews him the truth, every thing misleads him. The two criterions of truth, reason and the senses, beside being often unfaithful, impose mutually upon each other. Our senses mislead our reason by false appearances; and reason plays them the same trick in return, and revenges itself upon them. The passions of the mind discompose the senses, and leave bad impressions upon them. They lie, and impose on each other.

What are our natural principles, but principles we are used to? In children, those they have received from the customs of their parents, in the same way that animals learn to run after one another.

A different custom produces different natural principles. This is proved by experience. And if there are some principles of nature indelible by custom, there are likewise some impressions of custom indelible by nature. This depends on disposition.

Parents are fearful lest the natural affection of their children should be effaced; what a nature then is this, which is liable to be effaced? Custom is

a second nature, which eradicates the first. Why then is not custom called natural? I much fear that this nature itself is only an original custom, as custom is a secondary nature.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MISERY OF MAN.

NOTHING is more capable of making us enter into the knowledge of human misery, than a consideration of the real cause of that perpetual agitation, in which men pass away all their lives.

The soul is sent into the body to sojourn there a few days. She knows that this is only the passage to a voyage for eternity, and that she has only the short period that life endures to prepare herself for it. The necessities of nature take up the greatest part of this time; and but very little is left to be at her own disposal. And yet this little which remains so greatly incommodes her, and so strangely perplexes her, that she only studies how to lose it. It is an intolerable burden to her, to be obliged to live with herself, and think of herself. So that her whole care is to forget herself, and to let this short and precious period pass away without reflection, by amusing herself with things that may prevent her from thinking of it.

This is the source of all the tumultuous occupations of men, and of all that is called diversion, or pastime; in which their only aim in effect is, to make the time pass away without feeling it, or rather without feeling themselves; and, by wasting this small portion of life, to avoid that bitterness and inward disgust, which would necessarily accompany an

attention to ourselves for that period. The soul finds nothing in herself that contents her. She sees nothing but what it distresses her to think of. And this obliges her to look round about her, to seek how she may lose the recollection of her real condition, by applying herself to external objects. Her pleasure consists in this forgetfulness: and nothing is wanting to make her miserable, but obliging her to see herself, and to live with herself.

Men are charged from their infancy with the care of their honour, of their property, and with the property and honour of their relations and friends. We burden them with the study of languages, of the sciences, of exercises, and of arts. We load them with business, and persuade them they can never be truly happy except they do so and so, by their industry and care; that their fortune, their honour, and even the fortune and honour of their friends, may be safe; and that the failure of either of these things will render them miserable. Thus we give them offices and employments, and harass them from morning to night. A strange method, say you, of making them happy! What more could be done to render them miserable? Would you know what more might be done? Nothing else but to release them from these cares. For then they would see themselves, and think of themselves, and that they would find insupportable. Hence, if they gain any relaxation after all their toils, they toil again to throw away their time in some sort of diversion, which may occupy them wholly, and hide them from themselves.

For this reason, when I have set myself to consider the various agitations of human life, the toil and the danger to which men expose themselves at court, in the camp, in the pursuit of their ambitious pretensions, which give birth to so much quarrelling and

passion, and to so many desperate and fatal adventures, I have often said that all the misfortunes of men arise from their not knowing how to be at rest in their closets. A person who has property enough to support him, if he did but know how to dwell with himself, would never go elsewhere for the sake of a voyage by sea, or the siege of a city; and if men had no other aim but simply to live, they would find no occasion for such hazardous employments.

I speak only of those who look at themselves, without any view of religion. For it is indeed one of the miracles of the Christian religion, that it reconciles man to himself, by reconciling him to God; that it makes him able to bear the sight of himself; and renders solitude and silence more agreeable to some persons, than all the bustle and commerce of mankind. But it is not by confining man to himself that it produces these wonderful effects; it is only by leading him to God, and by supporting him under the sense of his miseries, with the hope of another life, in which he will be freed from them for ever.

But as for those who are actuated only by the emotions they feel in themselves, and in their own nature, it is impossible they should continue in that leisure, which gives them an opportunity of considering and viewing themselves, without immediately falling into chagrin and distress. Man who loves nothing but himself, hates nothing so much as to be alone with himself. He seeks nothing but for himself, and yet flies from nothing so much as himself; because when he sees himself, he does not find himself such as he could wish; he only discovers a heap of inevitable miseries, and a void as to all real and solid good, which he is incapable to fill.

Let a man choose what condition he will, and let him accumulate together all the goods and all the

gratifications which appear capable of making any man content, yet if, notwithstanding all this, he is without employment and diversion, and has time to reflect on what he is, this languishing felicity will soon come to an end. He will of necessity fall into tormenting apprehensions of what is to come, and if he does not get something external to employ him, he unavoidably becomes miserable.

But is not regal dignity of itself sufficiently great to render him who possesses it happy, by the mere view of what he is? Is it necessary that a king should be diverted from this, like the common ranks of mankind? I see clearly that you will make some men happy, by diverting them from the prospect of their domestic distresses, and making them apply all their care to become excellent dancers. But shall we say this of a king? Will he be more happy by employing himself in these trifling amusements, than in contemplating his own grandeur? What object more satisfactory can you present to his mind? Is it not doing injustice to his joy, to employ his mind with the care of adjusting his steps by the cadence of a song, or of ordering a ball with propriety, instead of leaving him to enjoy repose in the contemplation of the glory and splendour which surround him? Let us make the experiment: let us leave a king all alone, without any sensual gratification, without any care upon his mind, without company, to think at leisure upon himself; and we shall soon find that a king who has a sight of himself, is a man full of miseries, who feels them as much as any other. Therefore, this is always carefully avoided, and there are always a great number of people kept about the persons of kings, whose business it is to make diversions succeed after business, and to watch all their hours of leisure, to supply them with

pleasures and sports, that no time may be left vacant; that is to say, they are surrounded by people, who take a wonderful deal of care that the king shall not be alone, and in a situation to think on himself, well knowing, that if he does this, all king as he is, he must be miserable.

The principal thing which supports men under great employments, otherwise so full of trouble, is, that they are incessantly called off from thinking of themselves.

Consider it well. What else is it for a man to be a Superintendant, a Chancellor, a Prime-Minister, but to have a number of people flocking to him from all quarters, so as not to leave him a single hour in the day to think on himself? And when such men fall into disgrace and are banished to their country seats, though they want neither fortune nor domestics to minister to their wants, they do not fail to be unhappy; because no one now hinders them from thinking on themselves.

Whence comes it to pass, that so many men are delighted with gaming, or hunting, or other diversions, which employ their whole souls? Not because there is in fact any happiness in what may be acquired by the sport, or that they imagine there is any real blessedness to be found in the money which they may win, or in the hare which they chase: they would not even accept this if you were to offer it them. It is not those gentle and easy habits which leave us at leisure to think on our own wretched condition, that they want; but the hurry, which diverts us from thinking.

Hence it is, that men are so much in love with the noise and tumult of the world; that a prison is a punishment so horrible, and that there are so few persons who can bear to be shut up in solitude.

This then is all that men have been able to invent, to render themselves happy.

And those who amuse themselves with merely pointing out the vanity and meanness of the diversions which men follow, are indeed well acquainted with one part of their miseries; for a considerable part it is, to be able to take pleasure in things so base and contemptible. But they do not understand the principle which renders these miserable things even necessary to men, so long as they are uncured of that inward and natural unhappiness, of not being able to bear the sight of themselves. If a man were to buy a hare in the market, it would not protect him from this, but the chase of it may. And therefore when we tell men, that what they seek with so much ardour is unable to satisfy them, that there is nothing more mean, and more vain, if they answered as they would do if they thought on the subject, there would not be any difference between us; they would ingenuously declare, that they propose nothing in these pursuits but a violent and impetuous scene of action, which may keep them from the view of themselves, and that, therefore, they make choice of some pleasing objects, which may charm them, and take up all their thoughts. But they do not answer thus, because they are ignorant of themselves. A gentleman sincerely believes that there is somewhat great and noble in hunting; he will tell you it is a royal sport. And it is the same with any other thing about which the great number of men are taken up. They imagine that there must be somewhat real and solid in the objects themselves. When some persuade themselves that if they could but obtain such an office, they should afterwards repose themselves with pleasure; they are insensible of the insatiable nature of desire. They think they are seeking after nothing but disquiet.

Men have one secret instinct, which prompts them to seek abroad for employ-

ment or recreation, and which proceeds from a sense of their continual unhappiness. And they have another secret instinct, a remain of the grandeur of their original nature, which makes them conscious that happiness in effect consists only in repose. And from these two opposite instincts, they form a confused design, which is hidden even from themselves in the recesses of the soul, which engages them to seek after repose by means of agitation, and constantly to imagine that the satisfaction they have not will infallibly ensue, if by surmounting certain difficulties, which they now can discern, they may but open by that means the door to tranquillity.

Thus our life runs away. We seek rest by encountering some impediments, and when we have removed them rest itself becomes insupportable. For either we are ruminating on the miseries we feel, or on those which we fear. And even when we see ourselves on all sides under shelter, disquietude, though deprived of its authority, will yet infallibly shoot forth from the heart, where it is naturally rooted, and fill the mind with its poison.

Therefore, when Cineas said to Pyrrhus, who proposed to enjoy himself with his friends, after he should have conquered a good part of the world, that he would do better to take his happiness in advance, by beginning at once to enjoy ease, without going in quest of it through so much fatigue: he gave him advice, which was indeed full of difficulty, and which was scarcely more rational than the project of that ambitious young prince. Each of them supposed that a man could be satisfied with himself, and his present possessions, without filling up the void in his heart by imaginary expectations; which is false. Pyrrhus could never have been happy, either before or after the conquest of the world; and perhaps that easy life

which his minister recommended to him, was still less capable of giving him satisfaction than the tumult of all the battles and voyages which he had planned in his mind.

We ought therefore to acknowledge, that man is really so miserable that he would disquiet himself without any external cause of disquiet, by the mere state alone of his natural condition; and yet he is at the same time so trifling and vain, that while he is full of a thousand essential reasons for sorrow, the least trifle in the world is sufficient to divert him. Insomuch, that if we seriously consider it, he seems more to be pitied for being able to amuse himself with things so frivolous and mean, than for being distressed at his own real miseries. His diversions are infinitely less rational than his uneasinesses.

Whence is it that this man, who has lately lost his only son, and who was this morning entirely taken up with law-suits and litigations, now seems to think nothing more of them? Do not be surprised; he is wholly taken up with looking which way the stag will pass, which his dogs have been in chase of these six hours. He cares about nothing else now, notwithstanding all his afflictions. If you can but make him enter into some diversion, you make him happy for that time; but with a false and imaginary happiness, not arising from the possession of any real and solid good, but from a levity of spirit, which makes him lose the memory of his real calamities, to attach himself to mean and ridiculous objects, unworthy of his attention, and still more unworthy of his love. It is the joy of a sick man, of a man in a phrenzy, not arising from the health, but from the disorder of his mind. It is the laugh of folly and delusion. It is wonderful to observe what trifling things please men in their games and diver-

sions. It is true, that by keeping their minds employed, they preserve them from reflecting on their real evils; but then such things keep them employed, only because the mind forms in them an imaginary object of delight, to which it attaches itself.

What do you take to be the object of those men, whom you see playing at tennis with such application of mind, and such exertion of body? The pleasure of boasting to-morrow among their friends, that they have played better than any body else. This is the real source of their earnestness. And thus others again toil in their closets, for the sake of shewing the learned that they have resolved a question in algebra, hitherto reputed inexplicable. And many others, foolishly enough, in my opinion, expose themselves to the greatest of dangers, to vaunt of some town they have taken; nor are there wanting those who kill themselves in taking notice of all this; not that they may grow wiser, but merely to shew that they know the vanity of it: and these last are the most foolish of all, because they are so knowingly; whereas we may suppose of the rest, that they would not act as they do, but for want of knowing better.

One man passes away his life without uneasiness, by gaming every day for a trifling stake, that would be rendered unhappy if you were to give him every morning the sum which he might win in the day, upon condition that he should refrain from play. It will be said, perhaps, that it is the amusement of the play which he seeks, and not the gain. Yet if you make him play for nothing, he will feel no eagerness about it, and becomes dull. It is not, therefore, the mere amusement which he seeks; a languishing amusement without any interest would fatigue him: he must be allowed to heat and rouse himself, by imagining that

he should be happy in gaining that which he would not accept if it were given him on condition of not playing; and that he shall create an object of passion, which shall excite his desire, his anger, his fear, and his hope.

So that these diversions, which constitute the happiness of men, are not only contemptible, but false and deceitful: that is to say, their object is merely a phantom and delusion, which would be incapable of occupying the mind of man, if he had not lost the taste and perception of real good, and were he not filled with baseness, vanity, levity, pride, and an infinite number of other vices; and they only relieve us under our miseries, by creating a misery more real, and more injurious. For such is whatever hinders us from thinking principally about ourselves, and which makes us insensibly lose our time. Without this, we should, indeed, feel dissatisfaction, but this dissatisfaction would lead us to seek some more solid means of escaping from it. But diversions deceive us, amuse us, and lead us on heedlessly to our graves.

Mankind, having no remedy against death, ignorance, and misery, have fancied the way to be happy was to think nothing about them. This is all they have been able to invent to console themselves under their calamities. But a most miserable consolation it is, because it tends not to the cure of the evil, but only to the concealment of it for a very short time; and because by concealing it, it hinders us from having recourse to such means as would really cure it. Thus, by a strange subversion of the nature of man, he finds that disquiet, which is to him the most sensible evil, is in one respect his greatest good, because it may contribute, more than any thing else, to make him seek after real restoration; while his diversions, which he looks upon as his principal good, are indeed his greatest e-

because they are of all things those which most effectually keep him back from seeking the remedy of his miseries. And both the one and the other are admirable proofs, both of the misery and corruption of man, and at the same time of his dignity. For he only grows weary of every object, and engages in such a multitude of pursuits, because he still retains the idea of his lost happiness; and not finding it within himself, he vainly seeks it in external things, without ever obtaining satisfaction, because it is neither to be found in ourselves, nor in creatures, but in God alone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THOUGHTS ON MIRACLES.

We are to judge of doctrine by miracles, and of miracles by doctrine. The doctrine shews the nature of the miracles, and the miracles shew the nature of the doctrine. All this is true, and contains no contradiction.

Some miracles are certain evidences of the truth, others are not. There must be a mark by which we may distinguish them, or they would be useless. But they are not useless; they are fundamentally necessary.

The rule, therefore, which is given us, must be such as shall not destroy the evidence which real miracles afford of the truth; which it is the principal end of miracles to establish.

Were there no miracles ever joined to falsehood, they would be in themselves demonstrative. If there were no rule by which we might distinguish them, they would be useless, and would afford us no reason for our faith.

Moses has given us one rule, which is when the

miracle is intended to lead men to idolatry[a]; and Jesus Christ has given us another; "There is no man," says He, "which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me[b]:" whence it follows, that whoever speaks openly against Jesus Christ cannot perform miracles in His Name; therefore if he does perform any, they are not performed in the Name of Jesus Christ, and he is therefore to be rejected. We see then the grounds for the disbelief of miracles, to which we are not to add any other. That in the Old Testament is, when they turn us from God; and that in the New, when they turn us from Jesus Christ.

So that immediately on the sight of a miracle, we must either submit to it, or have some strong reasons for the contrary. We ought to examine whether the person who performs it denies God, or Jesus Christ and the Church.

Every religion is false which, as to its faith, does not worship one God, as the Author of all things; and which, as to its morality, does not love one God alone, as the object of all things.

Every religion which does not now acknowledge Jesus Christ is notoriously false, and miracles would be insufficient to demonstrate it.

The Jews had a doctrine from God, as we have from Jesus Christ; and that was confirmed by miracles, and prohibitions against crediting any workers of miracles who should teach them a contrary doctrine; they were also commanded to have recourse to the chief priests, and to adhere strictly to them. So that whatsoever reasons we have now to refuse our belief to the workers of miracles, it may seem they had likewise, with regard to Jesus Christ and His apostles.

Nevertheless, it is most certain that they were highly culpable for refusing to credit Him on account

[a] Deut. xiii. 1—3.

[b] Mark ix. 39.

of His miracles, for Jesus Christ declares, that if they had not seen His miracles they would not have been guilty. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin[c]."

It follows, therefore, that He judged that His miracles were infallible proofs of His doctrine, and that the Jews were under obligation to believe in Him. And, indeed, His miracles were what rendered the Jews criminal in their unbelief: for the arguments they might have drawn from the Scripture during the life of Jesus Christ, would not have been fully demonstrative. We find in them, for instance, that Moses had said a prophet should come, &c., but this was not sufficient to prove that Jesus Christ was that prophet, which was the whole question in dispute. Such passages were sufficient to shew that He might be the Messiah, and this, together with His miracles, ought to have convinced them that He really was so.

The prophecies alone were not sufficient as proofs of Jesus Christ during His life: so that they would not have been culpable for not believing in Him before His death, if His miracles had not been decisive. Therefore miracles are sufficient, when we see that the doctrine is not inconsistent, and they ought, in that case, to be credited.

Jesus Christ has proved that He was the Messiah, in verifying His doctrine and mission by miracles, rather than by resting them wholly on Scripture and the prophecies.

It was by miracles that Nicodemus was persuaded His doctrine was from God; "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him[d];" He did not judge of the miracles by the doctrine, but of the doctrine by the miracles.

[c] John xv. 24.

[d] John iii. 2.

Therefore although a doctrine may be suspicious, as that of Jesus Christ perhaps was to Nicodemus, because it seemed to destroy the traditions of the Pharisees, yet if there are plain and undeniable miracles on the same side, the authority of the miracle must overbalance any difficulty that arises in the doctrine: the reason of which is this immoveable principle, that God cannot lead into error.

There seems to be a reciprocal duty between God and man. "Come now and let us reason together," says God by Isaiah[e]. And in another place, "What could I have done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it[f]?"

It is a duty men owe to God, that they should embrace the religion He sends them; and God owes to men, that He should not lead them into error.

But now they would be led into error, if any workers of miracles should publish a false doctrine, which did not appear visibly false to the eye of common sense, and if a much greater worker of miracles had not previously cautioned them not to believe such persons.

Thus if there were a division in the Church, and the Arians for example, who assert they have the authority of Scripture no less than the catholics, had performed miracles, and the catholics had not, men would be led into error. For as a man who pretends to tell us the mysteries of God is not worthy to be credited on his own private authority, so a man who, in proof of his communication with God, shall raise the dead, foretel future events, remove mountains, heal diseases, deserves to be believed, and it is impious not to give him credit, provided he be not convicted of falsehood by some other person, who performs still greater miracles.

But is not God said to tempt us? And may He

[e] Isa. i. 18.

[f] Isa. v. 4.

not therefore tempt us by miracles which seem to lead into error?

I answer, to tempt and to lead into error are very different things. God tempts; but He never leads into error. To tempt is only to present the occasion; which imposes no necessity on our belief: to lead into error is to put a man under a necessity of embracing and regarding a falsehood. This is what God cannot do, and yet what He would do, if, in a question which is obscure, He permitted a miracle to be wrought on the erroneous side.

From this we must conclude that it is impossible for a man concealing a wicked doctrine, and representing it as good, by pretending to conformity with God and the Church, to work a miracle, in order insensibly to insinuate false and erroneous opinions. This cannot happen; and still less can it happen that God, who knows all hearts, should work miracles in favour of such a deceiver.

There is a great difference between a man who is not for Jesus Christ, and declares it; and one who is not for Jesus Christ, but makes a pretence of being for Him. The former may possibly work miracles, but not the latter; because it is plain of the one, that he is acting in opposition to the truth, but it is not so of the other; and thus the nature of miracles is more clear.

Miracles, therefore, are a test of things which admit of doubt, between Pagans and Jews, Jews and Christians, catholics and heretics, the calumniator and the person calumniated, and between the three crosses.

This has been seen in all the contests of truth against error; in those of Abel against Cain, of Moses against Pharaoh's magicians, of Elijah against the false prophets, of Jesus Christ against the Pharisees, of St. Paul against Bar-Jesus, of the apostles against the exorcists, of Christians against infidels,

of catholics against heretics: and this is what shall be also seen in the contention of Elias and Enoch against Antichrist. In miracles truth will always prevail.

In short, in every dispute concerning the true God, or the truth of religion, there has never been a miracle performed on the side of error, without greater on the side of truth.

By this rule it is evident that the Jews were under obligation to believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was suspected by them; but His miracles were infinitely more clear than the suspicions against Him. They ought therefore to have believed Him.

In the days of Jesus Christ some believed on Him; others disbelieved Him on account of those prophecies which specified Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah; whereas they supposed Jesus Christ to have been born in Nazareth. But they ought to have enquired more diligently whether He was born in Bethlehem: for His miracles being convincing, this pretended contradiction of the doctrine concerning Him to the Scriptures, and the obscurity of His appearance, did not at all excuse them, though it blinded them.

Jesus Christ cured him that was born blind, and performed many other miracles on the Sabbath-day, by which He blinded the Pharisees, who pretended to judge of His miracles by His doctrine.

The same rule which obliges us to believe Jesus Christ obliges us to disbelieve Antichrist.

Jesus Christ spake neither against God nor against Moses. Antichrist and the false prophets, which are foretold in both Testaments, will speak openly against God, and against Jesus Christ. God will never permit a secret enemy to perform miracles openly.

Moses prophesied of Jesus Christ, and commanded the people to regard Him. Jesus

Christ has prophesied of Antichrist, and forbidden us to regard him.

The miracles of Jesus Christ were not foretold by Antichrist, but the miracles of Antichrist are foretold by Jesus Christ. So that if Jesus Christ had not been the Messiah, He would have led men into error; but they cannot be led into it, with any reason, by the miracles of Antichrist. Therefore the miracles of Antichrist do not in any degree prejudice the miracles of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ foretold the miracles of Antichrist, He had no apprehension that He should impair the authority of His own.

There is no reason whatever for believing in Antichrist, which there is not also for believing in Jesus Christ; but there are many for believing in Jesus Christ, which there are not for believing in Antichrist.

Miracles were employed in the foundation of the Church, and will be useful in preserving it to the coming of Antichrist, and to the end.

Wherefore God, to preserve this evidence to His Church, has either confounded false miracles, or foretold them; and has, by one means or the other, raised Himself above that which is supernatural with respect to us, and has raised us above it likewise. It will be the same in time to come; either God will not suffer the existence of false miracles, or He will produce greater.

For miracles have so much force and influence, that it was absolutely necessary that God, seeing it is so clear that He exists, should warn us not to credit them, when they were performed in opposition to Himself; for else they might have been able to mislead us.

So that the several passages in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy, which prohibit all belief in, or attention to those who work miracles in order to pervert men from the worship of the true God; and that in

St. Mark, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect[g]," and others of the like import, are so far from lessening the authority of miracles, that nothing can more clearly evidence their force.

The reason of men's disbelieving true miracles is want of charity: "Ye believe not," said Jesus Christ to the Jews, "because ye are not of My sheep[h]." The reason of their believing false miracles is the same want of charity. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie[i]."

When I have considered whence it is that men give such credit to the pretended remedies of so many impostors, so as often to put even their lives into their hands, it has appeared to me to be no other than this, that there are such things in the world as real remedies; for it would be impossible that there should be so many false ones, and that they should obtain so great a degree of credit, if there were none that are true. For if there never had been any such things, and were all distempers incurable, it is impossible that men should ever have imagined they could produce any, and still more so, that such numbers should have given credit to those who pretended to possess them. For if a man should give out that he had a medicine which would preserve men from dying, nobody would believe him, there being no example of any such thing having ever existed. But as there certainly is a great number of remedies, the efficacy of which has been proved by the knowledge even of the wisest of men, credit is given to them on that ground: and as the thing cannot be denied in general, on account of particular real

[g] Mark xiii. 22. [h] John x. 26. [i] 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

effects, the multitude who are unable to distinguish which of these particular effects are real, gives credit to them all. So the reason why some ascribe so many false effects to the moon, is, that she has some real influences, as the ebbing and flowing of the sea.

And it appears equally evident to me that there could never have been so many pretended miracles, false revelations, witchcrafts, &c., but from there having been others which were real; nor so many false religions, but because there was one which was the true. For had there never been any thing of this sort, it is next to impossible that any could have imagined it, and still more so that others should have believed them. But because there were very remarkable things which were true, and were therefore believed by the greatest among men, this impression was the cause which made the greater part of mankind so capable of giving credit to those which were spurious. And therefore, instead of concluding that there are no true miracles because there are false ones, we ought on the contrary to infer that there are true miracles because there are so many false ones; and that the only reason why there are false ones is because there are others which are true; and that in like manner the only reason why there are false religions is because there is a true religion. For the mind of man having been once led to these things by what is true, becomes afterward susceptible of admitting what is counterfeit.

We are commanded to hear the Church, but we are not commanded to believe miracles; because the latter is natural, and not the former. The one required a precept, which the other did not.

There are so very few to whom God makes Himself known by these extraordinary interpositions, that it

is our duty to profit well by those opportunities He has afforded us. For He only departs from the secrets of nature under which He is veiled, that He may excite in us faith to serve Him with more ardour when we know Him with more certainty.

If God were continually to give fresh revelations of Himself to men, there would be no virtue in believing Him; and if He had never given any, faith could scarcely have had any existence. But He is for the most part concealed, and only discloses Himself occasionally to those whom He would engage in His service. This wonderful obscurity in which God is hid, impenetrable to human sight, is a powerful motive to solitude, and retirement from the view of the world. Before the incarnation God remained hidden under the veil of nature which conceals Him from us, and when the time was come for His appearance, He was still more hidden by clothing Himself with humanity; He was much more easily known while He was invisible than when He made Himself visible. And at length, when He designed to accomplish the promise which He made to His apostles, to continue with His Church till His second coming, He chose the most strange and obscure concealment of all, namely, that under the elements of the Eucharist. It is this sacrament which St. John calls in the Revelation the hidden manna[k]; and I think that Isaiah saw Him thus, when he said in the spirit of prophecy, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself[l];" this is the greatest concealment He can assume. The veil of nature which conceals God has been penetrated by many infidels, who, as St. Paul testifies, have seen the invisible God through visible nature[m]; many heretical Christians have known Him through His huma-

[k] Rev. ii. 17. [l] Isa. xlv. 15 [m] Rom. i. 20.

nity, and have worshipped Jesus Christ as God and man. But as for us, we ought to esteem ourselves happy that it has pleased God to enlighten us to discern Him under the elements of bread and wine.

To these considerations we may add the mystery of God's Spirit, who is concealed in the Scriptures. For whereas there are two perfect senses of them, a literal and a mystical; the Jews resting in the former, never so much as think there is another, nor apply themselves to search after it; so wicked persons, beholding the operations of nature, ascribe them to nature, without thinking of any other author. And as the Jews, seeing a perfect human nature in Jesus Christ, did not seek for another: "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not," says Isaiah, in their name[a]; so also heretics, seeing the perfect appearance of bread in the Eucharist, look for no other substance. Every thing contains some mystery. All things are the veils of their Creator. Christians ought to see Him in every thing. Temporal afflictions hide those eternal blessings to which they lead: temporal enjoyments cover those eternal evils which they procure. Let us beg of God to make us know Him and serve Him in all things; and let us render Him infinite thanks, that being hidden in every thing from so many others, He should in so many things, and in so many ways, have disclosed Himself to us.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHRISTIAN REFLECTION.

THE ungodly, who abandon themselves blindly to their passions, without either knowing God, or giving

[a] Isa. liii. 3.

themselves the trouble to seek Him, verify in themselves this one principle of the faith which they oppose, that human nature is in a state of corruption. And the Jews, who obstinately withstand the Christian religion, verify in like manner this other principle of the same faith, which they oppose, namely, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, and that He came to redeem mankind, and to rescue them from the misery and corruption into which they were fallen. And this they do as well by the state in which we see them at present, and which was foretold in the prophecies, as by the prophecies themselves, which are still in their hands, and which they inviolably preserve, as containing the marks by which the Messiah is to be known. Thus the evidences of the depravity of men, and of redemption by Jesus Christ, which are the two principal truths which Christianity establishes, may be deduced from the wicked, who live in indifference about religion, and from the Jews who are its irreconcilable enemies.

The dignity of man in his innocence consisted in ruling and making use of the creatures; but under his present corruption, it consists in retiring from them, and in submitting himself to them.

Many err the more dangerously because they take a truth as the foundation of their error. This mistake lies, not in the believing a falsehood, but in regarding one truth to the exclusion of another.

There are a great number of truths both in faith and in morals, which seem repugnant and contrary, all of which subsist together in wonderful order.

The ground of all heresy is the rejection of some of these truths; and the source of all the objections made by heretics against us, is their ignorance of some of these truths.

And it usually happens that not being able to con-

ceive the connection of two seemingly opposite truths, and supposing that the admission of one necessarily includes a rejection of the other, they embrace the one and exclude the other.

The Nestorians maintained there were two persons in Jesus Christ, because there are two natures; and the Eutychians, on the contrary, that there was but one nature, because He was but one person. The catholics are orthodox in joining together both truths, the two natures and one person.

The shortest way to prevent heresies is to teach all truths without reserve; and the surest method of confuting heresies is to expose them without reserve.

Grace and nature will be always in the world. There will always be Pelagians, and there will always be Catholics; because the first birth produces the one, and the second birth the other.

The Church, together with Jesus Christ, to whom she is inseparably united, merits the conversion of all those who are not in the true religion. And those who are converted, afterward assist the mother which has delivered them.

The body can no more live without the head than the head without the body. He that separates from the one or the other is no more of the body, nor does he belong any longer to Jesus Christ. All virtues, martyrdom, austerities, and all good works, are of no avail out of the Church, and out of communion with the head of the Church.

This will be one of the confusions of the damned, to see themselves condemned by their own reason, by which they have taken upon them to condemn the Christian religion.

The lives of men in general, and the lives of saints, have this in common, that all of them aspire after happiness; they only differ with regard to the object in which they place it: and each of them account those their enemies who prevent them from attaining it.

We ought to judge what is good and what is evil by the will of God, which can never be unjust or erroneous, and not by our own will, which is always full of wickedness and error.

Jesus Christ in His gospel has given this mark of those who have faith, that they shall speak a new language: and indeed a renovation of thoughts and desires causes that of conversation. These new things which cannot be displeasing to God, as the old man cannot possibly please Him, are very different from the novelties of this world, because worldly things, how new soever they may be, grow old by continuance; whereas this new disposition, the longer it continues, the more new it becomes. "Our outward man perisheth," says St. Paul, "yet the inward man is renewed day by day[a];" and it will only be completely new in eternity, when we shall sing without ceasing the new song, of which David speaks in his psalms, namely, the song inspired by the new spirit of charity.

When St. Peter and the apostles consulted about the abolition of circumcision, where the point in debate was the acting contrary to the law of God, they did not refer to the prophets, but only considered the reception of the Holy Ghost by persons uncircumcised. They judged it more certain that God should approve of those whom He had filled with His Spirit, than that He should require an observance of the ceremonial law. They knew the only end of the law was the reception of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore as these men had received it without circumcision, that ordinance had ceased to be necessary.

Two laws are more adequate to the regulation of the whole Christian community than all political institutions together; namely, the love of God, and that of our neighbour.

[a] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Religion is proportioned to minds of every description. The generality of men look only at its outward condition and establishment. And our religion is such, that its very establishment is a sufficient evidence of its truth. Others trace it up to the apostles; the more learned go back to the beginning of the world. The angels see it better and higher still, for they see it in God Himself.

Those to whom God has given an inward sense of religion in their hearts are truly happy, and thoroughly convinced. But as for those who have not this, we have no way of procuring it for them but by reasoning; waiting till God shall imprint it Himself on their hearts; without which, their faith is not profitable to salvation.

God, to reserve to Himself the right of instructing us, and to render the difficulties of our own being unintelligible to us, has laid the knot so high, or, to speak more properly, so low, that we are unable to reach it. So that it is not by the struggles of our reason, but by a simple submission of it, that we are made capable of truly knowing ourselves.

Ungodly persons, who profess to be guided by reason, ought to have their reason wonderfully strong. What then have they to say? "Do we not see that beasts live and die like men, and Turks like Christians? The Turks have their ceremonies, their prophets, their doctors, their saints, their religious orders, as well as we?" &c. But does this contradict Scripture? Does not the Scripture avow all this? If you care but little about the knowledge of truth, this may be enough to set you at rest; but if you desire with your whole heart to know it, you must go more into detail. This sort of levity might be well enough about a vain question of philosophy, but not where your all is at stake. And yet, after making some trivial reflection of this na-

ture, men go on again to amuse themselves, just as before.

It is an awful thing to feel all that we possess continually wasting away, and at the same time to set our heart upon it, without enquiring after something more solid and durable.

Our life ought to be very different on these two suppositions: one, that we may abide here for ever: the other, that it is certain we cannot remain here long, and uncertain whether we shall remain even an hour. The latter supposition is our case.

Let us imagine a number of men in chains, all condemned to die, and some of them slaughtered every day in sight of the rest, who see their own fate in that of their companions, and yet wait their own turn, looking carelessly at one another, without concern, and without hope: this is a picture of the condition of men.

The variety of parties in the world ought to make you more earnest in seeking the truth. For if you die without worshipping the true God, you are ruined. "But," say you, "if He had designed that I should worship Him, He would have left me some tokens of His will." Why, He has really left them, but you are careless about them: therefore, at least, enquire: it is well worth your while.

Atheists ought surely to offer nothing but what is perfectly clear. But a man must have lost his senses to affirm it is perfectly clear that the soul is mortal. I freely allow it is unnecessary to look deeply into the system of Copernicus; but it concerns us more than our life to know whether the soul is mortal or immortal.

The prophecies, nay even miracles, and the other proofs of our religion, are not such as can be called geometrically demonstrative. But I only want you now to admit, that it is not acting contrary to reason to believe them. They

both clearness and obscurity, to illuminate some, and to confuse others. But the clearness is such as surpasses, or at least equals, the clearest things that can be brought against them; insomuch that it is not reason that can determine men not to regard them: on the contrary, it can only be concupiscence and depravity of heart. So that there is sufficient evidence to condemn those who refuse to believe, if there be not sufficient to overcome them. And hence it will appear, that in those who are guided by the gospel, it is grace and not reason that makes them follow it; and in those who slight it, it is concupiscence and not reason that makes them reject it.

Who can do otherwise than admire and embrace a religion which thoroughly knows those truths, which, the more we know, the more we shall be obliged to acknowledge?

A person who discovers the evidences of Christianity is like an heir who finds the title deeds of his estate. Would he say at once they are false, and neglect to examine them?

There are two descriptions of persons who possess the knowledge of God; those whose hearts are humbled, and who love self-contempt and abasement, whatever degree of understanding they may be endued with, be it little or much; and those who have sufficient understanding to discover the truth, through all the opposition they can experience.

The wise men among the pagans who affirmed there was only one God, were persecuted; the Jews were hated on that account, and Christians have been still more so.

I see no greater difficulty in believing the resurrection of the dead, or the conception of the Virgin than the creation of the world. Is it less easy to re-produce a human body than it was to produce it at first? If we were unacquainted with the natural mode of genera-

tion, would it appear more strange to see a child from a woman only, than from a man and a woman?

There is a great difference between quiet, and security of conscience. The former should only be derived from a sincere search after truth; but nothing can give the latter but truth itself.

There are two articles of faith equally certain: one, that man, either in his state of creation, or in that of grace, is raised above all nature, made like unto God, and a partaker of the divine nature; the other, that in his state of corruption and sin, he is fallen from this greatness, and become like to the beasts. These two propositions are firm and certain: the holy Scripture bears a positive testimony to both. For, in some places we read, "My delights were with the sons of men[b]." "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh[c]." "I have said ye are gods[d]," &c. and in others, "All flesh is grass[e]." "Man is like unto the beasts that perish[f]." "I said in my heart, concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that themselves are beasts[g]."

The instances we have of the heroic deaths of the Lacedemonians and others, do but little affect us; for what indeed do they all signify to us? But the examples of the death of the martyrs touch us, for they are members of us: we have a common interest with them; and their fortitude may give birth to ours. There is nothing like this in the examples of the pagans: we have no connection with them. Thus we are not enriched by the riches of a stranger, as we are by the riches of a father or an husband.

We never disengage ourselves from any thing without some degree of pain. We do not feel our chain, says St. Austin, while we

[b] Prov. viii. 31. [c] Joel ii. 28. [d] Ps. lxxxii. 6. [e] Isa. xl. 6. [f] Ps. xlix. 12. [g] Eccles. iii. 18.

willingly follow him who pulls it; but when we begin to resist, and to draw back, we become sufferers; the chain is put upon the stretch, and endures the utmost violence. Such a chain is our body, which death alone can break. Our Lord has said, that from the coming of John the Baptist, that is to say, from his coming in the heart of every believer, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force[h]." Before we are touched from on high, we have nothing but the weight of our own concupiscence, which bears us down to the earth. But when God is pleased to draw us up toward Himself, these two contrary efforts produce that violence, which God alone is able to overcome. "But we can do all things," as St. Leo observes, "with Him, without whom we can do nothing." We must therefore resolve to endure this warfare all our life long, for there is no such thing as peace. "Jesus Christ came not to send peace on earth, but a sword[i]." Nevertheless we must acknowledge, that, as the Scripture says, "The wisdom of men is foolishness with God[k]." So we may say that this war, hard as it appears to many, is peace with God, and this is the peace which Jesus Christ has brought. But it will not be perfect till the destruction of the body. And this it is that makes us wish for death; bearing, however, with life, for the love of Him who suffered both life and death for us, and who, as St. Paul expresses it, "is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think[l]."

We should endeavour not to be distressed about any thing, but to take every event for the best. I apprehend this to be a duty, and the neglect of it to be a sin. For in truth, the reason why sin is sin, is merely because it is con-

[h] Matt. xi. 12. [i] Matt. x. 34. [k] 1 Cor. iii. 19. [l] Ephes. iii. 20.

trary to the will of God. If, therefore, the essence of sin consists in having a will contradictory to the known will of God, it seems clear to me, that when He discovers His will to us by events, we sin if we do not conform ourselves to it.

When truth is deserted and persecuted, this seems to be the time that the service which we yield to God in defending it, is peculiarly acceptable. He wills that we should judge of grace by a comparison with nature. And thus He allows us to believe, that as a prince, dethroned by his own subjects, retains the most tender affection for those who continue faithful to him in the public revolt; so it appears, that God will regard those with peculiar goodness who maintain the purity of religion when it is attacked. But there is this difference between the kings of the earth, and the King of kings; that princes do not make their subjects loyal, but find them so; whereas God never finds men otherwise than disloyal without His grace, and that He Himself makes them faithful when they are so. So that while kings are wont to own their obligation to those who continue in their duty and allegiance; those, on the contrary, who persevere in the service of God, are under infinite obligations to Him on that very account.

No austerities of the body nor exercises of mind, but only the good emotions of the heart, have any merit, or are able to support the pains of the body and the mind. For in short, two things are essential to sanctification, pains, and pleasures. St. Paul informs us that it is "through much tribulation, and afflictions without number, we must enter into the kingdom of God[m]." Now this ought to comfort those who feel these afflictions, because being forewarned that the path to the heaven they seek is

[m] Acts xiv. 22

full of them, they ought to rejoice at finding so many marks of their being in the true way. But these pains are not without their pleasures, by which alone they can be surmounted. For as those who forsake God to return to the world, only do it because they find more enjoyment, in the pleasures of the world than in those of union to God; and because this victorious charm draws them aside, making them repent of their first choice, and rendering them, as Tertullian speaks, the devil's penitents; so men would never abandon the pleasures of the world, to embrace the Cross of Jesus Christ, did they not feel more real delight in contempt, poverty, nakedness, and in the scorn of men, than in all the pleasures of sin. And therefore, as Tertullian also observes, "We are not to suppose the Christian life is a life of sadness. We never quit one pleasure, but for the sake of a greater." "Pray without ceasing," says St. Paul, "in every thing give thanks, rejoice evermore[n]." It is the joy of finding God which is the spring of our sorrow for having offended Him, and of the whole change of our life. He that has found a treasure hid in a field, according to the parable of our Lord, is so transported as to go "and sell all that he has, and buy that field[o]." Worldly men have their sorrows, but they have not that joy which Jesus Christ said the world can neither give nor take away. The blessed in heaven possess this joy without any mixture of sorrow. And Christians have this joy, mingled with sorrow, for having followed other pleasures, and for fear of losing it by these other pleasures, which are tempting them without ceasing. We should therefore unremittingly endeavour to preserve this fear, which both preserves and moderates our joy; and when we find ourselves car-

[n] 1 Thess. v. 16—18.

[o] Matt. xiii. 44.

ried too far toward the one, we ought to incline ourselves toward the other, that we may keep ourselves upright. "Remember your comforts in the day of affliction, and your afflictions in the days of rejoicing," says the Scripture[p], till the promise which our Lord has given us of making His joy perfect in us be fulfilled. Let us not, therefore, suffer ourselves to be beaten down by affliction, nor imagine that piety consists only in bitterness without consolation. True piety, which only receives its completion in heaven, is nevertheless so replete with consolations, that they fill its beginning, its progress, and its crown. It is a light so resplendent that it brightens every thing which belongs to it. If some grief be intermixed with it, especially at its commencement, this proceeds from ourselves, and not from virtue; for it is not the effect of that piety which has been begun in us, but of that impiety which still remains. Root out impiety, and your joy will be unalloyed. Let us not therefore ascribe this sadness to devotion, but to ourselves; and let us only expect relief in our own sanctification.

What is past ought to give us no uneasiness, except that of regret for our faults. And what is to come ought still less to affect us, because it is nothing with regard to us now, and perhaps we shall never live to see it. The present is the only time which is properly ours; and we ought to use this in conformity to the will of God. To this our thoughts should be principally directed. Yet the world is generally so restless, that men scarcely ever think of the present time, and the instant they are now actually living, but of those in which they are to live. So that we are always in a disposition to live in future, but never to live now. Our Lord has not chosen,

[p] Eccles. vii. 14.

that our foresight should extend beyond the day that is present. These are the limits which He requires us to observe, both for the sake of our salvation, and for our own repose.

We sometimes correct ourselves more effectually by the sight of what is evil, than by the example of what is good. And it is highly useful to accustom ourselves to derive instruction from evil, because it is so common, whereas that which is good is more uncommon.

In the thirteenth chapter of St. Mark Jesus Christ discourses at large to His Apostles concerning His second coming. And as whatever happens to the Church happens likewise to every Christian in particular, it is certain that this whole chapter describes as well the state of every regenerated person, and the destruction of the old man in him, as the state of the whole universe, which shall be destroyed to give place to the new heavens and new earth, of which the Scripture speaks. The prediction which it contains of the destruction of the rejected temple, which is the figure of the destruction of the man of sin in every one of us, and of which it is said, that "not one stone shall be left upon another;" teaches us, that there shall not be left a single affection of the old man. And those dreadful civil and domestic wars are so lively a representation of the inward trouble which they feel who devote themselves to God, that nothing could have been more accurately described.

The Holy Spirit resides invisibly in the remains of those who are departed in the grace of God, till He shall appear visibly in them at the resurrection. And it is hence that the reliques of the saints are so worthy of veneration: for God never forsakes those that are truly His, not even in the grave, where their bodies, although dead to the eyes of men, are yet living in the sight

of God; because sin has no longer any existence in them, whereas it always resides in them during this life, at least as to its root, though not always as to its fruits. And this root of bitterness, which is inseparable from them during life, makes it unlawful to honour them when living, as they are then more worthy of hatred. Hence death is necessary entirely to mortify that unhappy root, and this is what renders it desirable.

The elect will be unconscious of their virtues, and the reprobate of their crimes. Both will say, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered[q]?" &c.

Jesus Christ refused the testimony of evil spirits, and of men uncalled, and chose that of God, and of John the Baptist.

While I have been writing down a thought, it has sometimes escaped me; but this reminds me of my weakness, which I am continually forgetting, and that instructs me as much as the thought could do which I have forgotten; for all my study is to know my own nothingness.

The defects of Montaigne are gross. He abounds in lewd and indecent expressions. These can do no good. His thoughts on self-murder, and on death, are horrible. He inculcates an indifference about salvation, without either fear or repentance. His work not being composed to lead men to piety, his plan did not oblige him to that; but we are always obliged not to lead them away from it. Whatever may be said to excuse his licentious opinions on many subjects, it is impossible to find any sort of excuse for his pagan sentiments concerning death. For a man must have utterly abandoned all goodness, if he does not at least desire to die like a Christian: and yet to die in carelessness and unconcern is the wish that runs through all his performance.

[q] Matt. xxv. 37. 44.

That which deceives us in comparing what passed formerly in the Church, with what we see it now, is, that in common we look on St. Athanasius, St. Theresa, and the other holy saints, as being crowned with glory. Now that time has cleared up things, it does really appear so. But at the time when that great saint was persecuted, he was a mere man who bore the name of Athanasius; and St. Theresa, in her day, was like the other religious sisters in her order. "Elias was a man of like passions as we are," says St. James[r], to wean Christians from that false idea which makes us reject the examples of the saints, as disproportioned to our own condition. They were saints, we cry, and not men like us.

In conversing with those who have an aversion to religion, we should begin by shewing them that it is by no means contrary to reason; in the next place, that it is worthy of veneration, to inspire them with respect for it; and after this, we should describe it as lovely, to make them wish it may be true; and then we may demonstrate to them, by irrefragable proofs, that it is true; we may shew them its antiquity and holiness, its majesty and sublimity; and finally shew them it is amiable, in that it holds out to us the true good.

A single expression of David or Moses, as for instance, this, "God will circumcise your hearts," is sufficient to enable us to judge of their spirit. Supposing all their other discourses to be ambiguous, and to leave a doubt whether they were philosophers, or Christians, one word of this kind is enough to determine all the rest. Here the ambiguity must vanish, however obscure it might appear before.

If we should err in supposing the Christian religion to be true, we can be no great losers by the mis-

[r] James v. 17.

take. But how dreadful must it be to err in supposing it false!

The easiest circumstances of life, in the opinion of the world, are the most difficult, according to the judgment of God; and, on the other hand, nothing is so difficult, in the opinion of the world, as a life of religion, whereas nothing is so easy as such a life, in the judgment of God. Nothing is more easy, according to the doctrine of the world, than to be high in office, and enjoy ample revenues; but nothing is more difficult than to live in these according to the will of God, and without taking delight and satisfaction in them.

The Old Testament contained the types of future happiness; and the New contains the means of attaining it. The figures were those of pleasure, the means are those of repentance. And yet the paschal lamb was eaten with bitter herbs, to teach us, that there is no arriving at joy, but by sorrow.

The word Galilee happening to be uttered as it were by chance, by the Jewish rabble, when they accused Jesus Christ before Pilate, occasioned Pilate to send Him to Herod, which fulfilled the mystery of His being judged both by the Jews and the Gentiles. Thus a mere accident, in appearance, occasioned the completion of the prophecy.

A man told me one day, that he was full of joy and satisfaction, as he came from confession; another told me, that he was full of fear. I thought that these two men put together would make one good one; and that each of them was defective, in not possessing the feelings of the other.

There is a pleasure in being in a vessel tossed by a tempest, while we are certain there is no danger of its sinking. The persecutions of the Church are of this description.

As the two great sources of all our sins are pride and sloth, God has been pleased to make known two of His

attributes for their cure, His mercy, and His justice. The property of His justice is to abase our pride; and that of His mercy is to overcome our indolence, and excite to good works; according to this passage: "The goodness of God leadeth us to repentance[s]." And this respecting the Ninevites: "Let us repent, and see if He will not have mercy on us[t]." Thus the mercy of God is so far from encouraging remissness, that, on the contrary, nothing is more opposite to it. And instead of saying, If our God were not a merciful God, we should use our utmost endeavours to fulfil His commands; we ought, on the contrary, to say, because God is a God of mercy, we ought to labour with all our strength to fulfil what He has commanded.

The history of the Church ought in propriety to be called the history of truth.

All that is in the world, is either "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life:" the lust of feeling, the lust of knowing, and the lust of ruling. Miserable is that accursed land, which these three rivers of fire burn up, rather than water! Happy those who being upon these rivers are not overwhelmed, or carried away, but remain immoveable; and who, not standing erect, but sitting on a sure and humble seat, whence they will not rise till the light appear, after having rested there in peace, shall stretch forth their hands to Him who will raise them up, and cause them to stand upright and firm within the gates of the holy Jerusalem, where they shall no longer fear the assaults of pride! And who weep in the mean time; not to see all these perishable things pass away, but at the remembrance of their dear country, the heavenly Jerusalem; after which they sigh incessantly, because of the continuance of their exile.

A miracle, say some,

[s] Rom. ii. 4.

[t] Jonah iii. 9.

would confirm my belief. So men talk about what they do not see. But those regions, which afar off seem to be the bounds of our sight, cease to bound it when we have reached them. We discover a scene beyond them. Nothing can stop the versatility of our minds. There is no rule, we say, without an exception; and no truth so universal as not to have some part in which it appears to disadvantage; and if principles be not absolutely universal, we have sufficient pretence to apply the exception to the present case, and to say, this is not always a mark of truth; therefore in some cases it is not so: we then have nothing more to do than to persuade ourselves, that this is one of those cases, and we must be very stupid indeed if we can find no pretext for that opinion.

Charity is not a figurative precept. To say that Jesus Christ, who came to take away the figure, in order to establish the truth, came only to introduce the figure of charity, and to remove the substance which existed before, is abominable.

The heart has its arguments with which reason is not acquainted. We feel this in a thousand instances. It is the heart which feels God, and not reason. This is perfect faith God known to the heart.

How many stars have our telescopes enabled us to discover, which had no existence with the philosophers of former times! They attacked Scripture on account of its so often mentioning the immense number of the stars. There are but a thousand and twenty-two of them in all, said they: we know it.

The knowledge of external things will never console us for our ignorance of morality in the time of affliction: but the knowledge of morality will always console us under the ignorance of external things.

Man is so framed, that by often telling him he is a fool, he believes it; and by often telling himself so, he

persuades himself of it. For every person holds an inward conversation with himself, which it highly concerns him well to regulate, because, even in this sense, evil conversations corrupt good manners. We ought to keep silence, as much as possible, and to converse with ourselves only about God, and thus we shall be most effectually convinced of our own folly.

What is the difference between a soldier and a Carthusian, as to obedience? For they are equally under subjection, equally dependent, and engaged in labours equally painful. But the soldier all along hopes to be his own master, and yet never becomes so, for captains and even princes are always slavish and dependent. But yet he is always hoping for independence, and always endeavouring to attain it; whereas the Carthusian makes a vow that he never will be independent. They do not differ with respect to perpetual servitude, which is the portion of both; but in the hope which one cherishes, and which the other does not.

Our own will, though it should obtain all it can wish, would never be contented. But we are contented from the very instant that we renounce it. We never can be contented with it, nor otherwise than contented without it.

The true and only virtue consists in hating ourselves (because we are hateful by our concupiscence) and in seeking a being who is truly amiable, that we may love him. But as we cannot love that which is absolutely out of us, we must love some being who can dwell in us, and is nevertheless distinct from us. Now there is no such object, but the Universal Being. "The kingdom of God is within us[u]." The universal good is within us, and yet is distinct from us.

It is wrong for persons to attach themselves to us,

[u] Luke xvii. 21.

though they do it voluntarily, and with pleasure. We deceive those in whom we give rise to such a desire. For we are not the true end of any others, nor have we wherewith to satisfy them. Are we not on the borders of death, so that the object of their attachment must die? As it would be criminal in us to make them credit a falshood, although we might recommend it with eloquence, and they might embrace it with pleasure; so are we blameable if we labour to make others love us, and to make them attach themselves to us. We ought to warn persons whom we find ready to credit an untruth, that they may not believe it, whatever advantage we may be likely to reap by their mistake; and we ought also to warn others against attaching themselves to us; because their whole life ought to be spent in seeking God, or in studying to please Him.

To put our trust in forms and ceremonies is superstition; but not to comply with them is pride.

All sects and religions in the world had natural reason for their guide. Christians alone have been obliged not to take their rules of acting from themselves, but to inform themselves of those rules which Jesus Christ delivered to the primitive Christians, in order that they might be transmitted to us. There are certain persons who are weary of this restraint. They want to have the liberty of following their own imaginations, like the rest of the world. It is in vain that we cry to them, as the prophets did formerly to the Jews, "Enter into the Church, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." They answer like the Jews, "We will not walk therein; but we will certainly do according to the thoughts of our own heart, like the nations round about us[x]."

There are three ways of

[x] Jer. vi. 16; Ezek. xx. 32, &c.

believing; through reason, through custom, and through inspiration. Christianity, which is the only rational religion, admits none as its children who do not believe through inspiration. Not that it excludes reason or custom: on the contrary, we ought to open our minds to conviction by arguments; and to confirm ourselves in the belief of them by habitual custom. But Christianity requires us, with humiliation of mind, to seek that inspiration which alone can produce this true and salutary end—"Lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect[y]."

We never do evil so cheerfully and effectually as when we do it upon a false principle of conscience.

The Jews, who were called to subdue nations and princes, were themselves the slaves of sin; and Christians, whose calling it is to serve and be subject, are the true children of liberty.

Is it courage in a dying man, in all his weakness and agony, to dare an omnipotent and eternal God?

I would readily give credit to histories, the witnesses of which seal them with their own blood.

Holy fear proceeds from faith; false fear arises from doubt:—the former leads to hope, because it arises from faith; we hope in that God whom we believe:—the latter leads to despair; for we fear a God in whom we have no faith. Persons of the one character dread to lose God; and those of the other to find Him.

Solomon and Job best knew, and best spake, of human misery; one, the most happy, the other the most unfortunate of men: one knew by experience the vanity of pleasure; as the other did the reality of affliction.

The pagans spake ill of Israel; and so did the prophet Ezekiel,—but so far from this giving the Israelites a right to reply, You

[y] 1 Cor. i. 17.

speak of us as the heathens do, he lays his greatest stress on the heathens having talked of them as he did.

God does not expect us to submit our faith to Him without reason, or to subdue us to Himself by tyranny. But He does not intend to give us a reason for every thing. And to reconcile these contrarieties, He is pleased clearly to shew us those divine characters of Himself which may convince us of what He is, and to establish His authority by miracles and evidences that we shall be unable to resist,—in order that we might, afterward, believe without hesitation whatever He teaches us, when we find no other reason to reject it, but because we are unable to know of ourselves whether it be true or not.

There are but three descriptions of men; those who serve God having found Him; those who, not having yet found Him, are employed in seeking after Him; and lastly, those who live without either having found Him, or seeking after Him. The first are rational and happy; the third are irrational and foolish; the second are unhappy, but yet are rational.

Men often mistake their imagination for their heart; and suppose themselves to be really converted as soon as ever they think about conversion.

Reason proceeds slowly—upon so many views, and such different maxims, which it ought always to keep in view—that it either becomes stupid or goes astray continually, for want of perceiving them all at once. The case is quite otherwise with sense; which acts instantaneously, and is always ready to act. We ought, therefore,—when our reason has made us acquainted with the truth,—to endeavour to imprint our faith on the sentiments of our heart, for without this it will always be wavering and uncertain.

The essential nature of God makes it necessary tha+

His justice should be infinite as well as His mercy. Yet His justice and severity towards the reprobate is still less amazing than His mercy towards the elect.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

THE sciences have two extremities, which touch each other. The first is pure natural ignorance, in which every man is born. The other is the perfection attained by great souls, who having gone through every thing that man can know, feel that they know nothing, and find themselves in the same ignorance from which they set out. But it is a wise ignorance that knows itself. Those who are between these extremities, who have got out of their natural ignorance, but have not been able to arrive at the other, have a tincture of science which fills them with vanity, and makes them vaunt of their attainments. These are the men who trouble the world, and judge the most falsely of every thing. The common people, and the learned, usually compose the train of the world: the others despise them, and are despised by them.

The common people pay respect to persons of high birth:—the half-learned despise them; alleging, that birth is not a superiority of parts, but of chance:—the learned respect them; not from the motives of the vulgar, but for much higher reasons:—Certain zealots, who have but little knowledge, despise them in spite of those considerations, on account of which the learned respect them; for they judge of them by a new light, with which piety has inspired them:—but real Christians honour them from a light which is superior

to that. Thus one opinion succeeds to another, both for and against, according to the different degrees of knowledge which we possess.

God having made heaven and earth, which are unconscious of the felicity of existence, has been also pleased to create beings who might be capable of knowing Him, and who should compose one body, consisting of members capable of thinking. All men are members of this body; and in order to be happy, it is necessary they should conform their own private wills to that universal will which governs the whole body. But yet it often happens that a man thinks himself to be a whole, and seeing no other person on whom he is dependent, he thinks he depends only upon himself, and therefore wants to make himself the centre and the body. But he soon finds, in such a state, that he is like a member separated from the body, and which not having in itself a principle of life, can only wander and confound itself in the uncertainty of its existence. At length, however, when he begins to know himself, and is, as it were, come to himself again, he finds that he is not the whole body, that he is only a member of the universal body; that to be a member, is neither to have life, being, or motion, but for the body, and through the spirit which animates the body. That a member, separated from the body to which it belongs, has from that time nothing more than a perishing and dying existence; that therefore he ought only to love himself for the sake of the body, or rather he ought only to love the body, because in loving it he loves himself, since he has no being but in it, by it, and for it.

Therefore, in order to regulate our love of ourselves, we must remember this body, composed of thinking beings; and, that we are members of a whole; and then we shall see in what

way each member ought to love himself.

The body loves the hand: and the hand, if it had a will, ought to love itself in the same proportion that the body loves it. All love beyond this would be unjust.

If the feet and the hands had a private will of their own, they could never be in their proper order without submitting it to that of the body: without this, they must get into disorder and misery. But in seeking only the good of the body they procure their own good.

The members of our bodies are not conscious of the happiness which arises from their union to each other, of the admirable wisdom with which they are formed and connected, of the care which nature has taken to influence them with the spirits to make them grow and subsist. If they were capable of knowing this, and were to avail themselves of that knowledge for the purpose of keeping to themselves the nourishment they receive, without suffering it to pass on to the rest; they would not only be unjust, but miserable also, and would hate themselves, rather than love themselves; their felicity, as well as their duty, consisting in submitting to the conduct of that universal spirit to which they all belong, and which loves them better than they love themselves.

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit[a]." A Christian loves himself because he is a member of Jesus Christ; and he loves Jesus Christ because He is the head of that body of which he himself is a member. There is one whole, in which both are included.

Concupiscence and violence are the sources of all actions merely human. The former produces those which are voluntary, and the latter those which are involuntary.

[a] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Whence is it that a lame man does not offend us, and that a deficient mind does offend us? It is, because the lame man acknowledges that we walk straight; whereas the crippled in mind maintain that it is we who go lame. But for this, we should feel more compassion for them than resentment.

Epictetus proposes a similar question: why we are not angry when a man tells us that we have the head-ache, and yet fall into a passion when he tells us we reason ill, or make a wrong choice? The reason is, that we can be very certain that we have not the head-ache, or are not lame; but we cannot be so certain that we make a right choice. For having no assurance that we do so, but because it appears so to us, with all the light we have—when another, with all his light, sees the contrary; this confounds us, and keeps us in suspense; especially if a thousand other persons laugh at our choice; for then we must prefer our own light to that of so many others, which is a perplexing and difficult matter. But men never contradict each other thus about the lameness of any one.

The common people have some sound notions; for instance, that of preferring diversion and the chase to the study of poetry. The half-learned laugh at this, and triumph in shewing from thence the folly of the world. But for a reason which they do not perceive, we are right in distinguishing men on account of external things, as birth and fortune; the vulgar triumph in shewing how unreasonable they think this to be. But, on the contrary, it is highly reasonable and proper.

It is a great advantage to persons of quality, that a man at eighteen or twenty shall be as much known and respected as another can be, by merit alone, at fifty. So that they gain thirty years in advance without any trouble.

There are certain persons, who, to shew how unjust we are not to esteem them, never fail to urge how much they are respected by some people of quality. I would reply to them, Shew us the merit by which you have obtained the esteem of these persons, and we will esteem you in like manner.

If a man places himself at a window to see those who pass by, and I happen to go that way, can I say he placed himself there to see me? No; for he did not think of me in particular. But he who loves a person on account of her beauty, does he love her? No; for the smallpox, by destroying her beauty, without taking away her life, will put an end to his love. And if I am loved for my understanding, or memory, is it I that am loved? No; for I may lose these qualities without ceasing to exist. What then is this I, if it neither exists in the body, nor in the soul? And how are we to love the body, or the soul, except for its qualities, which yet are not what make up this I, because they are perishable? For could we love the substance of a soul abstractedly, whatever qualities might be in it? That is impossible, and would be unjust. We therefore never love any person, but only the qualities of the person. Or if we do love any person, we must allow it is the assemblage of qualities that makes up the person.

The things we are most anxious about are most commonly trifling. As, for instance, to conceal the smallness of our property. This is a mere nothing, which our imagination swells to a mountain. Another turn of the imagination would make us discover it without pain.

There are some vices which cleave to us only by the intervention of others; and which, like branches, are taken away on removing the trunk.

When ill-nature has reason on its side, it becomes proud, and sets forth reason in all its lustre. And when

austerity, or a rigorous life, has proved unsuccessful with regard to the true good, and we are obliged to return and follow nature, it grows prouder by that return.

It is not happiness to be capable of being pleased with diversion; because all this is external and foreign, and consequently dependent, and liable to be disturbed by a thousand accidents, which give rise to inevitable afflictions.

There are some persons who would never have an author speak of things of which others have spoken; and if he does, they accuse him of telling them nothing that is new. But if the subject he treats of be not new, the method of treating it may be new. When two men play at tennis, they both play with the same ball, but one directs it best. I should as readily accuse him of using old words, as if the same ideas did not form another system of discourse, by a different disposition of them; just as the same words express quite different ideas by a different arrangement.

The world is full of good maxims; we only want the application of them. For example, we do not question that a man ought to expose his life to defend the public good; and many do this; but few do it in the cause of religion.

The height of wisdom is accounted folly, as much as an extreme want of it. Nothing is thought well of but mediocrity. The majority have decided this; and they bite at every one who goes out of the line, on which side soever it be. I will not oppose them; I consent to be classed among them; and if I refuse to be at the lowest end, it is not because it is low, but because it is the end, and I should equally refuse to be at the top. To get out of the medium is to get beyond humanity; the true greatness of man consists in knowing how to preserve it; and, so far from becoming great by departing from it, he

can only be great by not departing from it.

A man does not pass in the world as having any knowledge of poetry, unless he puts out the sign of a poet; or for being skilful in the mathematics, unless he holds out that of a mathematician. But persons of true sense hang out no sign at all: and make very little difference between the trade of a poet and that of an embroiderer. They are neither called poets nor geometricians, but they form a judgment of them all. You cannot guess at their talent. They talk of any thing which the company were speaking of when they came in. But you do not discover in them one talent more than another, except when there is a necessity for using it, and then you will perceive it; for their character is as much marked by our not saying they are good speakers, when there is no occasion for oratory, as by our saying they are so, when such an occasion presents itself. It is therefore a false kind of commendation to say of a man, at his first entrance into company, that he is well skilled in poetry: and it is a bad token when people only appeal to him, when the debate is about some particular verses.

Man is full of wants. He only loves those who can satisfy them. Such an one is a good mathematician, they cry: but I have nothing to do with mathematics. Such an one is a master of the art of war: but I do not want to go to war. What we want, therefore, is a man of probity, who can accommodate himself to all our necessities.

When we are in health, we cannot think what we should do if we were sick. Yet when we are so we take medicines cheerfully: the disease gives us resolution to do it. We then no longer desire those walks and diversions which we enjoyed when we were well, but which are incompatible with the necessities of the complaint. Nature gives us

new passions and desires agreeable to the present condition. It is not nature, therefore, which gives us the bitters that trouble us, but ourselves, by joining to the condition in which we are, the passions of that condition in which we are not.

Discourses of humility are matter of pride to the ostentatious, and of humility to the humble. And those of scepticism and doubt are matter of affirmation to the positive. Few people speak humbly of humility, or chastely of chastity, or doubtingly of doubt. We are full of duplicity, falsehood, and contradiction. We conceal and disguise ourselves from ourselves.

Noble actions, when concealed, are the more worthy of esteem. When I meet with any of these in history, they please me much. But yet they were not altogether concealed, because they are known; and this little manifestation of them diminishes their merit; for the best part of them is, that they were intended to be kept secret.

A jester is a mean character.

Self is hateful; and, therefore, those who do not set it aside, but content themselves with merely concealing it, are always hateful. By no means, say you; for while we act as we do, obligingly to all the world, they have no reason to hate us. That would be true if they hated nothing in this self but the displeasure it occasions them. But if I hate it because it is unjust, and makes itself the centre of every thing, I shall always hate it. In a word, self has these two qualities; it is unjust in its own nature, because it wants to be the centre of every thing: and it is troublesome to others, because it wishes to enslave them; for self is the enemy, and would be the tyrant of all others. You take away the inconvenience of it, but not the injustice; and, therefore, you cannot render it amiable to those who hate

its injustice. You can only make it agreeable to those who are unjust, and whose interest it does not oppose; thus you will still be unjust, and will please none but those who are also unjust.

I do not admire a man who possesses one virtue in its utmost perfection, if he does not, at the same time, possess the opposite virtue in an equal degree. Such an one was Epaminondas; he had the greatest valour, joined to the greatest benignity: otherwise it is not to rise, but to fall. A man never shews true greatness in being at one end of the line; but, in touching both extremities at once, and filling up all that lies between. But, perhaps, even this is nothing more than a sudden transition of the soul from one extreme to the other, so that, in fact, it is never, in itself, any thing more than a point; like a firebrand turned round and round with velocity. Yet this, at least, shews the agility of the soul, if not its greatness.

If our condition were really happy, we should have no occasion to divert ourselves from thinking of it.

I formerly spent a considerable time in the study of the abstract sciences; but the small number of persons with whom I could converse on them, disgusted me with them. When I began to study man, I saw that these abstract sciences are by no means adapted to him, and that I had strayed further from my proper condition by entering into them, than others had by remaining ignorant of them, I therefore easily forgave their neglect. I thought I should at least find more companions in the study of man, because this is his proper employ. But I have been again disappointed. There are still fewer of those who study man than of those who study geometry.

When all moves equally, nothing seems to move, as in a vessel under sail. When all run into disorder, none appears to do so. He that

stops, sees, as from a fixed point, how the rest are driving on.

Philosophers suppose themselves very clever, in having comprehended all their moral system under certain propositions. But why divide it into four rather than six? Why make out four kinds of virtue rather than ten? Why make it consist in abstain and sustain, (*abstine et sustine*) rather than in any thing else? But, say you, here it is all summed up in a word. Yes, but that is of no use, except you explain it; and as soon as you begin to explain it, and to open this precept, which comprehends all the rest, they come out from it in just the same confusion you was endeavouring to avoid. And thus, if they be all included in one, they are hidden, and useless; and if we develop them, they appear again in their natural confusion. Nature has constituted them all distinct; and although we may comprehend one in another, they yet subsist independent of each other. So that all these divisions and terms have hardly any other use than that of assisting the memory, and of serving as a kind of index to the articles they include.

If we would reprove another with success, and convince him that he is in the wrong, we must observe in what point of view he looks on the affair; because, in that way it generally is as he imagines, and to acknowledge that he is so far in the right. He will be pleased with this, because it intimates, not that he was mistaken but only that he had not considered the thing on all sides. For we do not feel it any disgrace not to see every thing; but we do not like to acknowledge that we have been deceived; and perhaps the reason of this may be, that the understanding is not deceived in that point of view in which it actually considers the subject, just as the simple perceptions of the senses are always true.

A man's virtue is not to be measured by his great attempts, but by his common actions.

The great and the little have the same accidents, the same troubles, the same passions. But the former are at the top of the wheel, and the latter near its centre, and therefore are less agitated by the same degree of motion.

We are, for the most part, more easily persuaded by reasons of our own finding out, than by those which have been discovered by others.

Though men may have no interest in what they say, we are not always from thence to conclude that they speak the truth; for there are some who lie merely for the sake of lying.

The example of Alexander's continence has not made so many converts to chastity, as that of his drunkenness has to intemperance. Men feel no shame in not being quite as virtuous as he, and think themselves very excusable in not being more vicious than he was. We think we have not quite reached the vices of the common people, when we see ourselves guilty of those of such great men; not considering that by these they level themselves with the most vulgar. We join ourselves to them at the same end at which they are joined to the vulgar. How lofty soever their condition may be, they are still connected in some way with the rest of mankind. They do not hang in the air, and form a totally separate society. If they are greater than us, it is because their head is higher; their feet are as low as ours. They all touch the same surface, and tread the same ground; and here they are as low as ourselves, or as children, or even as beasts.

It is the contest that pleases us, and not the victory. We like to see beasts fight; but not to see the conqueror tearing to pieces the animal he has vanquished. The only thing we wish is to behold the issue

of the combat; and as soon as that is decided we grow cloyed. So it is in our diversions; and in our enquiries after truth. We like to see controversies, and the contest of opinions, but are very indifferent about the truth when it is ascertained. In order that we may notice it with pleasure, it must make its appearance in a dispute. And thus with our passions; we have a pleasure in seeing two contrary passions clash, but if either of them prevail it changes into brutality. We never seek after things themselves, but after the pursuit of things. Thus, in a play, quiet scenes are good for nothing; nor extreme distress, without hope; nor love, as a mere animal passion.

We do not teach men to be honest, though we teach them every thing else; and yet they pique themselves on nothing so much as that. Thus, they chiefly value themselves on knowing the only thing they never learned.

What a senseless project it was in Montaigne to give such a picture of himself; and that not by chance, and against his general maxims, for all men fail in something, but on his professed principles, and as his first and principal design! For to say foolish things by accident, or through weakness, is a common misfortune; but to say them with design, and especially such things as those, is insupportable.

Men of disorderly lives tell those who live regularly that the latter deviate from nature; and that themselves are the only persons who follow her: as men who are sailing in a ship fancy those who stand on the shore to be receding. Each of them say the very same; we must stand at some fixed point to judge of the fact. The port itself decides with respect to the vessel; but where shall we find such a point in morality?

To pity the unfortunate is not concupiscence; on

the contrary, we are happy in bearing such a testimony in favour of humanity, and of acquiring reputation for pity and tenderness, without its costing us any thing. But then it is no great matter.

Would any man have thought that he who enjoyed the friendship of the kings of England and Poland, and the queen of Sweden, should, at length, have wanted a retreat and asylum in the world?

Things have different qualities, and the soul has different inclinations. Nothing that presents itself to the mind is absolutely simple, nor does the soul look at any thing with perfect simplicity. Hence we sometimes weep and sometimes laugh, at the very same thing.

We are so unhappy that we cannot take pleasure in any thing, but on condition of being displeased if it do not succeed, which a thousand accidents may occasion; and do, every hour. He that has found out the secret of delighting himself in good, without being disturbed by the opposite evil, has hit the true point.

There are different classes of men; the valiant, the dressy, the witty, and the pious; each of which ought to reign in their own circle, though not in any other. Sometimes they meet together, and we see the soldier and the beau foolishly fighting each other, to know which shall be the master, while the empire of each is totally different. They do not understand one another, and both of them are aiming at universal dominion. But nothing can obtain such a dominion, not even force; for this has no power in the republic of learning; it has no will but over external actions.

Ferox gens nullam esse vitam nisi in armis putat. They like death better than peace; while others would choose death rather than war. Any opinion gains preference to life, though the love of it appears so strong and so natural.

How difficult it is to propose any matter to the judgment of another, without corrupting his judgment by the manner of proposing it? To say I think it clear, or I think it obscure, leads his imagination to form that opinion, or provokes it to form the contrary. It is better to say nothing about the matter. For then the other will judge of the thing as it is, that is, as it is at that time, and as other circumstances, of which we are not the authors, shall make it appear; except, indeed, this silence should have a similar effect, either according to the turn and construction which the person shall be in the humour to give it; or, according to what he may gather from our look, and tone of voice. So easy is it to turn an opinion from its natural course, or, rather, so few opinions are there which are judicious and solid.

The Platonists, and even Epictetus and his followers, believe that God alone is worthy to be loved and admired, and yet they themselves desire to be loved and admired. They were ignorant of their natural depravity. If, indeed, they feel really disposed to love and adore Him, and find in this their principal joy, let them call themselves good, and welcome; but if they feel an aversion to this; if they have no inclination but to establish themselves in the good opinion of men; and if their whole perfection consists in being able, without restraint, to make others happy in loving them; I say that such perfection is to be abhorred. What! they know God, and are not desirous that men should love Him! They want men to trust only in them! They want to be the sole objects of that happiness which it is in the power of men to choose.

Montaigne was right in saying custom ought to be regarded as soon as it becomes custom, and we see it established, without stopping to enquire whether it be reasonable or not. This,

however, is to be understood only of that which is not contrary to natural or divine law. It is very true that people only follow it because they think it just, or else they would not regard it at all; for men will only be kept in subjection to reason or justice. Without this, custom would be thought tyranny; whereas, in fact, the dominion of reason and justice is no more tyrannical than that of inclination.

But it is highly proper to obey laws and customs, because they are laws, and the people understand that so doing constitutes them just. For this reason they never abandon them; whereas, if we make their justice to depend on any other thing, it is easy to render it disputable; and thus we make them ready to revolt.

How well have men done to distinguish one another rather by the exterior than by internal endowments! Here is another person and I disputing the way. Which shall give place to the other? The weakest of the two. But I am as stout as he. We must fight about it. But he has four footmen, and I have but one. That is evident: we have only to count them. I therefore must yield, and I am a fool if I contest it. This keeps us at peace, which is the greatest of blessings.

The nature of our bodies deadens our afflictions and our quarrels: for we change and become other persons. Neither the aggriever, nor the party aggrieved, continue the same. It is like affronting a nation, and seeing them again two generations afterward. They are still the French, but not the same.

The soul must undoubtedly be either mortal or immortal. This ought to make an entire difference in a system of morality. And yet the philosophers framed their moral systems altogether independent of it. What astonishing blindness!

The last act is always tragical, how pleasant soever

the play may have been throughout. We throw dust to dust, and the curtain drops for ever.

CHAPTER XXX.

THOUGHTS ON DEATH: EXTRACTED FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY M. PASCAL ON THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

When we are under affliction for the death of a person who was dear to us, or for any other misfortune which befals us, we ought not to seek for consolation in ourselves, or in other men, or in any part of the creation, but we ought to seek it in God alone. And the reason of this is, that no created being is the first cause of those accidents which we call afflictions. But the providence of God being the true and only cause, the sovereign, and the disposer of them, we ought, undoubtedly, to repair immediately to their source, and look up to their Author to find solid consolation. If we observe this rule, if we look on this death which we are lamenting, not as an effect of chance, or as a fatal necessity of nature, or as the sport of those elements and particles of which man is composed, (for God has not left His elect to the caprices of chance,) but as the indispensable, inevitable, just and holy result of a decree of God's providence now executed in the fulness of time; and that whatever has now happened, was from everlasting pre-determined and present with God; if, I say, by a transport of grace, we regard this occurrence, not in itself, and abstracted from God, but out of itself, and in the will of God, in the justice of His decree, and in the order of His providence, which is the real cause that has produced it, without which it would

not have happened, by which alone it has happened, and in the very manner in which it has happened; we shall adore in humble silence the unfathomable depth of His judgments; we shall reverence the holiness of His decrees; we shall bless the guidance of His providence; and, uniting our will to the will of God Himself, we shall choose with Him, in Him, and for Him, the very same events which He has chosen in us, and for us, from all eternity.

There is no consolation but in truth alone. It is evident that Seneca and Socrates have nothing which can convince or console us on these occasions. Both were in the error which has blinded all mankind from the beginning. They looked on death as natural to man; and all the discourses which they have founded on this false principle, are so vain and so destitute of solidity, that they only serve by their uselessness to demonstrate how weak men are in general, since the noblest productions of the wisest among them are so childish and contemptible.

It is not so with Jesus Christ; it is not so with the canonical books of Scripture. There the truth is revealed: and consolation is as infallibly joined to the truth, as it is infallibly separated from error. Let us, therefore, view death in that truth which the Holy Spirit has taught us. And we have the admirable advantage of knowing that death is, in truth and reality, the punishment of sin, imposed on man, to expiate his guilt, and necessary to man to cleanse him from sin: that it is this alone which can deliver the soul from the concupiscence of the body, from which saints are never entirely free, while they live in this world. We know that life, and the life of Christians, is a continual sacrifice, which can only be completed by death. We know that Jesus Christ came into the world and offered Himself as a sacrifice and a real propitiation;

that His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His sitting for ever at the right hand of the Father, and His presence in the eucharist, are but one and the same sacrifice: and we know that what was accomplished in Jesus Christ must be accomplished also in each of His members.

Let us then consider life as a sacrifice; and let the accidents of life make no other impression on the minds of Christians, but in proportion as they interrupt or accomplish this sacrifice. Let us count nothing evil but what turns a sacrifice to God into a sacrifice to the devil; and let us call every thing a good which renders that which was a sacrifice to the devil in Adam, a sacrifice to God; and let us examine the nature of death by this rule.

In order to this it is necessary to recur to the person of Jesus Christ: for as God only regards men through their mediator, Jesus Christ, so ought they neither to regard others nor themselves but through His mediation.

If we do not look through this medium, we shall find nothing in ourselves, but real miseries, or abominable pleasures: but if we consider all things in Jesus Christ, we shall find all is consolation, satisfaction, and edification.

Let us then view death in Jesus Christ; not without Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ it is dreadful, it is detestable, it is the terror of nature. In Jesus Christ, it is altogether different; it is amiable, holy, and the joy of the believer. Every thing, even death itself, is rendered sweet in Jesus Christ; and it was for this He suffered; He died to sanctify death and suffering to us. And as He was God and man, He was all that was great and all that was abject, that He might sanctify all things in Himself, except sin, and might be an example to us in every possible condition.

To know what dea-

and what death in Jesus Christ is, we must examine what place it holds in respect to His continual and uninterrupted sacrifice; and in order to this we may observe that in sacrifices the principal part is the death of the victim. The oblation and sanctification which precede are the preparations for it, but death is the completion; in which, by surrendering its life, the creature pays to God the utmost homage of which it is capable; thus annihilating itself before the eyes of His majesty, and adoring His supreme existence, who alone essentially exists. There is, indeed, another thing subsequent to the death of the victim, without which its death would be useless; namely, God's acceptance of the sacrifice, which is signified by the Scripture expression, "and the Lord smelled a sweet savour[a]." This, indeed, crowns the oblation; but it is rather an action of God towards the creature, than of the creature towards God; so that the last act of the creature is its death.

Each of these circumstances were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, when He came into the world. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself[b];" "When He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. Then, said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within My heart[c]." Here is His oblation; His sanctification immediately follows it. His sacrifice continued through His life, and was completed by His death. It was needful for Him "to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory[d]." "Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;" and "In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications,

[a] Gen. viii. 21. [b] Heb. ix. 14. [c] Heb. x. 5; Ps. xl. 7, 8. [d] Luke xxiv. 26.

with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, He was heard in that He feared;" and God raised Him from the dead, and clothed Him with that glory, (which was formerly prefigured by the fire which fell from heaven on the sacrifices,) to burn and consume His body, and to restore it to a life of glory. This is what Jesus Christ has obtained, and the purpose which was answered by His resurrection.

Thus this sacrifice being perfected by the death of Jesus Christ, and consummated by the resurrection of His body, in which the image of the body of sin was swallowed up in glory, Jesus Christ had performed every thing on His part; and nothing remained but that the sacrifice should be accepted of God, and that, as incense, it should ascend, and carry up its odour to the throne of the Divine Majesty. And thus Jesus Christ was, in this state of immolation, offered, raised up, and received at the throne of God itself, at His ascension; in which He rose partly by His own power and partly by the power of the Holy Spirit, which every where encompassed Him. He was carried up, as the odour of the sacrifices, which was the figure of Jesus Christ, was carried up by the air which supported it; and which represented the Holy Spirit. And in the Acts of the Apostles it is expressly related that He was received into heaven, to give us an assurance that this holy sacrifice, thus accomplished on the earth, has been accepted and received into the bosom of God.

Such is the state of things with regard to our glorious Lord. Let us now consider them in ourselves. When we enter into the Church, which is the world of believers, and more especially of the elect, into which Jesus Christ entered from the moment of His incarnation, by a privilege peculiar to Himself as the only Son of God, we are offered

and sanctified. The sacrifice continues through life, and is completed at death, in which the soul, entirely leaving all those vices, and that earthly love, the contagion of which had infected it during life, finishes the immolation of itself, and is received into the bosom of God.

Let us not therefore grieve for the death of believers, like pagans without hope. We have not lost them when they die. We lost them, as it were, as soon as they were admitted into the Church by baptism. From that moment they were God's; their life was devoted to God; their actions had no regard to the world; but for God. By death they are entirely separated from sin; and at this moment God receives them, and their sacrifice has its accomplishment and its crown. They have performed that which they vowed; they have finished the work which God gave them to do; they have fulfilled that which was the only end of their creation. The will of God respecting them is accomplished, and their will is absorbed in the divine. Let not us, therefore, separate what God has joined; and let us suppress, or at least moderate, by our understanding of the truth, the sentiments of corrupt and mistaken nature, which exhibits nothing but false representations, whose illusions pollute the holiness of those sentiments which the truth of the gospel ought to inspire.

Let us not then look at death as pagans, but as Christians; that is to say, with hope, as St. Paul enjoins; because this is the special privilege of Christians. Let us not think a corpse to be a mere infectious carcase, as the fallacy of nature represents it; but as the eternal and inviolable temple of the Holy Ghost, which, by faith, we know it to be.

For we know that the bodies of the saints are inhabited by the Holy Spirit until the resurrection, which

shall be performed by the power of the same Spirit, who resides in them for that purpose. This is the idea of the fathers. And for this reason we pay honour to the relics of the dead. And it was on the same principle that the eucharist was formerly put into the mouths of the deceased; because, knowing them to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, they thought them still worthy to be also united to this holy sacrament. But the Church has since altered this custom; not because she does not believe the bodies of good men to be sacred, but because the eucharist being the bread of life, and of the living, ought not to be given to the dead.

Let us not consider the faithful, who are departed in the grace of God, as having ceased to live; although nature suggests it; but as beginning to live, which is the testimony of truth. Let us not consider their souls as perished and annihilated, but as quickened and united to the sovereign of life. And thus, by a regard to these truths, let us correct those erroneous sentiments which are so rooted in our minds, and those emotions of fear which are so natural to man.

God created man with a two-fold love; love for his Creator, and love for himself; but with this restriction, that his love of his Creator should be infinite, that is, without any other end than God only; and that the love of himself should be finite, and always bearing a reference to God.

Man, in this estate, not only loved himself without sin, but could not, without sinning, have ceased to love himself.

Afterward, by the entrance of sin, man lost the former of these affections, and love of himself remaining the only passion in that great soul, which was capable of an infinite love, this self-love diffused itself, and flowed into the void which the love of God had quitted. And thus he loved himself

alone, and all things with respect to himself, so that his self-love became infinite.

This is the origin of self-love! It was natural to Adam: and, during his innocence, it was just; but it became criminal and immoderate in consequence of his sin.

This is the source of this love, and the cause both of its imperfection and its excess.

We may say the same of our desire for dominion, our love of ease, and other things. And it may also be easily applied to our dread of death. This was not only natural but just in Adam, while innocent; because his life being then acceptable to God, ought to have been agreeable to man; and death must have been an object of horror, because it would have been the termination of a life which was conformable to the will of God. But when man sinned his life became corrupt; his body and soul became at enmity against one another, and both of them against God.

Though this fatal change infected so holy a life, the love of life continued still; and the fear of death remaining the same, that which was just in Adam is unjust in us.

Thus arose the fear of death; and the cause of its present defectiveness.

Let us then clear up the darkness of nature by the light of faith. The fear of death is natural; and it was so in the state of innocence, because death could not have entered into paradise, without destroying a life which was altogether holy. It was therefore just to hate it, while it could not take place without separating a holy soul from a holy body: but it is just to love it, now it releases a holy soul from an unholy body. It was just to flee from it when it must have broken the peace between soul and body; but not now it terminates an irreconcilable dissension between them. In a word,

when it must have punished a guiltless body, by taking away its liberty of honouring God; when it must have separated the soul from a body perfectly subject to, and compliant with its volitions; when it must have put an end to all the happiness of which man is capable, it was just to abhor it. But now, when it ends a life stained with impurity, when it takes away from the body the liberty of sinning, when it delivers the soul from a powerful rebel, which was continually opposing all the means of its salvation, it would be highly unjust to entertain the same sentiments respecting it.

Let us not then abandon that love of life, which nature instils into us; because we have received it from God. But let it be a love for such a life only, as God gave it us for; and not for one contrary to that.

But while we allow of that love which Adam had for his life of innocence, and which even our Lord Jesus Christ felt for His, let us resolve to hate a life which is contrary to that which Jesus Christ loved; and to be afraid of such a death only as Jesus Christ Himself dreaded, a death which happens to a body that is acceptable to God; but let us not fear a death, which, as it punishes a sinful and cleanses an impure body, will inspire us with quite opposite sentiments, if we possess any faith, or hope, or charity.

It is one of the grand principles of Christianity, that whatever happened to Jesus Christ, is likewise to take place in the soul and body of every Christian: that as Jesus Christ suffered in this mortal life, was raised to a new life, and ascended into heaven, where He sat down at the right hand of God the Father; so the body and soul are to suffer, to die, to be raised again, and to ascend into heaven.

All these particulars are accomplished in the soul during this life; but not in the body.

The soul suffers and dies to sin, in repentance and baptism. The soul is raised to a new life in the sacraments. And at length the soul quits this earth, and soars toward heaven, by leading a heavenly life: which made St. Paul say, "Our conversation is in heaven[a]."

None of these things take place in the body during this life, but they will all be accomplished in it afterward.

For at our death the body dies as to this mortal life: at the judgment it shall rise to a new life: after the judgment, it shall ascend into heaven, and remain there to all eternity.

Thus the very same things happen to the body and to the soul, though at different periods: and the changes of the body do not take place till those of the soul are completed; that is, after death. Insomuch that death is both the consummation of bliss to the soul, and the beginning of bliss to the body.

Such is the admirable conduct of divine wisdom in the salvation of souls! And St. Austin informs us, on this subject, that God has disposed things in this manner, because if the death and resurrection of the human body were to be completed by baptism, men would yield themselves obedient to the gospel only from the love of life. Whereas the glory of faith shines with much greater brightness, by our passing to immortality through the shades of death.

It is not right that we should remain without pain and without feeling, in the afflictions and misfortunes which befal us; like angels, who have not the sentiments of our nature: nor yet is it right that we should indulge grief without consolation, like heathens, who have no sentiment of grace. But we ought both to mourn and to be comforted like Christians; the consolations of grace should rise superior to the feelings of nature:

[a] Phil. iii. 20.

so that grace may not only dwell, but be victorious in us: that by our thus hallowing the name of our Father, His will may become ours, His grace may reign and rule over nature; that our afflictions may be like a sacrifice, which His grace will complete and consume to the glory of God: and that these particular sacrifices may be the forerunners of that universal sacrifice, in which all nature shall be consummated by the power of Jesus Christ.

Thus shall we derive advantage from our own imperfections, when they furnish the matter for this whole burnt-offering. It is the object of real Christians to profit by their own imperfections, for "all things work together for good to the elect[f]."

And if we look at these things closely, and consider them as they really are, we shall find in them great helps to our edification. For as it is certain that the death of the body is only the image of that of the soul, and as we build on this principle, that we have reason to hope for the salvation of those whose death we lament, if we are not able to stop the course of our sadness and grief, we ought to draw this benefit from it, that since the death of the body is so terrible as to produce in us such emotions, the death of the soul would make us far more inconsolable. God has sent the first to those for whom we mourn; but we hope that He has rescued them from the second. Let us contemplate the greatness of our happiness, in the greatness of our misery; and let the excess of our grief be the measure of our joy.

One of the most solid and useful charities we can perform toward the dead, is to do that which they would desire of us, were they still in the world; and to put ourselves, for their sakes, into that condition which they now wish us to be in.

By this means we shall

[f] Rom. viii. 28.

make them, in some sort, revive in ourselves, while their counsels and instructions are still living and acting in us. And as the authors of heresies are punished in another life for the sinful practices in which they have engaged their followers, in whom their poison is still kept alive, so the dead are recompensed not only for their own virtues, but for those to which they have given rise by their counsels and their example.

Man is, most certainly, too weak to judge justly of the course of future events. Let us hope then in God, and not weary ourselves with rash and indiscreet apprehensions. Let us commit ourselves to Him for the conduct of our lives: and let not grief have the dominion over us.

St. Austin observes that there is in every man a Serpent, an Eve, and an Adam. Our senses and natural affections are the serpent; our concupiscence is the Eve; and the Adam is our reason.

Nature tempts us continually; concupiscence is for ever craving; but sin is not complete unless reason assent to it.

Let us then leave this serpent and this Eve, if we cannot entirely expel them; but let us pray that God by His grace will so fortify our Adam, that he may become victorious, and that Jesus Christ may be the conqueror over him, and may reign in us to all eternity.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

The more discernment a man possesses, the more originals he will discover among mankind. People in common do not see this difference between men.

A man may have good sense, and yet not be able to apply it alike to all subjects: for there are those who judge correctly in a certain order of things, and yet are quite confounded in others. Some draw consequences well from a few principles; others draw consequences as correctly from things in which there are many principles. Some, for instance, thoroughly understand the effects of water, in which there are but few principles, but the consequences of them are so fine as not to be reached without great penetration. Yet these persons would perhaps be no extraordinary geometricians: because geometry includes a great number of principles; and the nature of a man's mind may be such as to penetrate with ease to the bottom of a few principles, and yet not to dive into things where the principles are very numerous.

There are therefore two sorts of intellects; the one, capable of penetrating quickly and deeply into the consequences of principles; and this is the genius for accuracy: the other is able to comprehend a great number of principles without confounding them; and this is the genius for geometry. One is strength and exactness of mind, the other is extensiveness of mind. And one of these may exist without the other: for the mind may be strong, and yet contracted: or it may have a great reach, with but little strength.

There is a wide difference between a genius for geometry and a genius for business. In the former the principles are palpable, but so far from ordinary use, that a man finds it difficult to turn his head that way, for want of practice; but if he does attend to them, though it be ever so little, he sees them in all their evidence, and must have a very distorted judgment if he draws wrong inferences from principles which are too gross to be mistaken.

But in business, the prin-

ciples are in common use, and are obvious to all the world. There is no need here to turn the head, or to do ourselves any violence. The only thing wanting is a clear sight. But then it must be clear, because the principles are so unconnected and so numerous, that it is hardly possible but some of them should escape us. Now the omission of any one principle will lead us into error. So that the discernment must be very exact, to comprehend all the principles, and the mind must likewise be just, not to reason falsely from the principles when they are known.

All geometricians would, therefore, be men of business, if they were clear-sighted; for they do not reason falsely on the principles which they know. And men of business would be geometricians, if they could once turn their minds to the unaccustomed principles of geometry.

The reason then why some very able persons are not geometricians, is, because they cannot turn their minds to the principles of geometry: but the reason that geometricians are not men of business, is, because they do not see that which lies before them. For being accustomed to the clear and obvious principles of geometry, and to reason only after having clearly discerned and arranged their principles, they lose themselves in matters of business, the principles of which will not submit to any such arrangement. They are not to be discerned without difficulty; the mind rather feels than sees them; and it requires infinite labour to make those persons see them who do not discover them of themselves. They are things so nice and so numerous, that a man must have his understanding very subtle and clear, in order to apprehend them; for they must be perceived, in general, without the possibility of demonstrating them methodically, as may be done in geometry; because there

are no such determinate principles, and it would be endless to undertake to produce them. We must see the thing at once, and at a glance, without the progress of reasoning; at least, to a certain degree. Thus it rarely happens that geometricians are men of business, or that men of business are geometricians; because geometricians will treat matters of business geometrically, and they make themselves ridiculous by beginning first with definitions, and afterward with principles, which is not the way to proceed in this kind of reasoning. Not but the mind does the very same thing, but then it does it silently, naturally, and without art; in a way that none of us can explain, and very few even perceive.

Men of business, on the other hand, having been thus accustomed to judge of things at once, are so amazed when we offer them propositions which they comprehend nothing of, and which they cannot enter into, except by means of definitions, and dry principles, that, not having been accustomed to take things thus in detail, they soon become disheartened and disgusted. But persons of false judgment are never either men of business or geometricians.

Those, therefore, who are geometricians, and nothing more, judge correctly, but only if we explain every thing to them by definitions and principles; for otherwise they are both erroneous and insupportable; for they only proceed rightly upon principles which are thoroughly elucidated. And those who have a genius only for business, have not patience to descend into the first principles of speculative and abstract things, which they have seen nothing of in the world and in common life.

It is more supportable to die without thinking of death, than to think of death, even when there is no danger of it.

It often happens that

in order to prove certain things, we make use of examples, which those very things might have been taken to prove. But nevertheless this is not without its use: for as we always think the difficulty lies in the thing to be proved, the examples we adduce are more clear to us. So when we would illustrate a general rule, we instance a particular case; and if we would explain a particular case, we begin with the general rule. We always find somewhat obscure in that which we are desirous to prove, and somewhat clear in that which we make use of to prove it. For when we propose a thing in order to prove it, our imagination is always possessed with the notion that it is obscure; and that, on the contrary, that which we bring forward in proof of it, is clear, and thus we more easily understand it.

We fancy that all men conceive and feel alike, concerning objects which are presented to them: but we imagine this without any foundation, for we have no proof of it. I know very well that men employ the same words on the same occasions; and that when two men, for instance, look on the snow, both of them express their perception of this object by the same term, each of them saying it is white; and from this conformity of speech, we strongly conjecture there is a conformity of idea; but this is not absolutely demonstrative, although the chance lies on the side of the affirmative.

All our reasoning is reducible to submission to sentiment. Now fancy is like sentiment, and yet contrary to it: like it, because it does not reason; and contrary to it, because it is false. So that it is very difficult to distinguish between these two opposites. One man says, that my sentiment is fancy, and that his fancy is sentiment; and I say the same of his. We stand in need of a rule; reason presents itself, but

as this is pliable either way, it leaves us, at last, without one.

Those who judge of a work by rule, are, with respect to others, like a man who has a watch, compared with those who have not one. One says, we have been here these two hours; the other says, it is but three quarters of an hour. I look at my watch; I say to one, you are tired; and to the other, you pass your time pleasantly, for we have been here just an hour and a half; and I laugh at those who reply that my time passes on heavily, and that I judge of it by my own humour, for they do not know that I judge of it by my watch.

There are men in the world who are good speakers, and yet bad writers. The place, the company, &c. warms them, and draws more out of their minds than would be discovered in them without the glow this produces.

That which is good in Montaigne cannot be easily collected. That which is exceptionable, I now mean, exclusive of his morals, might have been corrected in a moment, if he had but been aware that he had made up too many stories, and talked too much of himself.

It is a great evil to follow the exception instead of the rule. We ought to be strict, and to oppose exceptions. But as there will always be some exceptions to every rule, we ought to judge rigorously, but yet justly.

In one sense it is true to affirm, that all the world is mistaken. For though the opinions of people may be sound in themselves, yet they are not so in their heads; because they fancy the truth to be where it is not; there is indeed truth in their opinions, but not where they suppose it to be.

Those who have a genius for invention are but few; those who have none are more numerous, and consequently make the stronger party. And we commonly

find, that the latter refuse to the inventors the glory which they merit, and seek after by their inventions. And if they resolutely maintain their claim, and treat those with contempt who invent nothing, all they get by it is, to be called by ridiculous names, and to be treated as visionaries. A man ought, therefore, to be very cautious of priding himself on this advantage, considerable as it is, and ought rather to rest satisfied with the esteem of the few, who know how to value it.

The understanding naturally believes, and the will naturally loves; so that if they be not directed to true objects, they will necessarily fix upon false ones.

Many things which are true, are contradicted; and many which are false, pass without contradiction. Contradiction is therefore no mark of falsehood, nor is the absence of it a mark of truth.

Cæsar was too old, in my opinion, to go about to amuse himself with conquering the world. Such an undertaking was fit for Alexander, who was a young man, and not easy to be restrained. But Cæsar ought to have been more considerate.

All the world sees that men labour for what is uncertain, in voyages, in war, &c. But all the world does not see that connection of things which demonstrates that they ought to do so. Montaigne saw that men are disgusted with those who are stupid, and that custom governs every thing; but he did not see the reason of either. Those who see effects and not their causes, are, in comparison with those who see the causes, like those who have eyes only, in comparison with those who are possessed of understanding likewise. For effects are, as it were, sensible, but causes are discernible only by the understanding. And though it is by the understanding that the effects are discerned, yet the understanding which discerns them only, is, to that

which distinguishes the causes, as the bodily senses are, compared to the mind.

The sense we have of the falseness of present pleasures, and our ignorance of the vanity of pleasures which are absent, are the causes of our inconstancy.

If we were to dream the same thing every night,—it would perhaps affect as much as the objects we see every day. And if an artisan were sure of dreaming, every night for twelve hours together that he was a king, I think he would be almost as happy as a king who should dream every night for twelve hours together that he was an artisan. Should we every night dream that we are pursued by our enemies, and frightened by these troublesome phantoms; or that we passed all our days in a succession of labour, as going a voyage, or the like; we should suffer almost as much as if the things were real; and should be as much afraid of going to sleep as we are now of awaking, when we have to fear entering on such misfortunes in reality. And, indeed, the misfortune would be nearly as great as the reality could be. But because our dreams are ever varying, and diversified,—what they present us with affects us much less than what we see when we are awake, on account of its continuance, which yet is not so constant and uniform, but that it changes also, though less abruptly, except on some few occasions, as when we travel; and on these we are accustomed to say, "Surely I am in a dream;" for life is a dream, a little less inconstant.

Kings and princes play sometimes. They are not always on their thrones: they grow weary of them. Greatness must be sometimes laid aside, in order to be enjoyed.

My humour depends but little on the weather. My fogs and fine days are within myself. The good or ill success of my affairs e-

does not much move me. I sometimes set myself against ill fortune, and the glory of overcoming it makes me master it with pleasure; whereas at other times I act with indifference, and even disgust, at prosperity.

It is a pleasant thing to consider that there are men in the world, who having renounced all the laws of God and of nature, yet make laws for themselves, which they exactly obey: as for instance, thieves, &c.

Those great efforts of mind which the soul sometimes reaches, are things which it cannot keep up to: it leaps, as it were, to them, and comes down again as suddenly.

Man is neither angel nor beast; and the mischief is, that he who would be thought an angel acts the beast.

Provided we know the ruling passion in any man, we make ourselves sure of being able to please him. And yet all men have fancies, which are contrary to their own good, even in the idea which they themselves form of good: and this inconsistency disconcerts those who wish to gain their affection.

A horse does not strive to be admired by his companion. We do, indeed, see some sort of emulation between them in a race, but this is of no further consequence; for when they are in the stable, the most clumsy and ill-proportioned will not, on that account, give up his oats to the other. It is not so among men. Their virtue will not satisfy them of itself; they are not content with it, if it does not give them some advantage over others.

As we corrupt our understanding we deprave our sentiment. Both the understanding and the sentiment are formed by conversation: so that good or bad company may make or spoil them. It is therefore of the greatest importance to choose well in this respect, that we may rectify them, and not corrupt them: but we cannot make this

choice, unless they are already corrected, and not corrupted. So that here is a circle, and happy are they who get out of it.

We naturally suppose ourselves much more capable of diving to the centre of things, than of embracing their circumference. The visible extent of the world plainly surpasses us. But yet as we surpass little things, we think ourselves capable of comprehending them. And yet it requires as much capacity to descend to nonentity, as to extend to the whole. It must be infinite to do either. And it appears to me that a man who could penetrate into the first elements of things, might also arrive at the knowledge of infinity. Each depends on the other; each conducts to the other. These extremes touch, and the further they are asunder the more they unite, for they meet in God, and in God alone.

If a man did but begin with the study of himself, he would soon find how incapable he is of proceeding further. For how is it possible that a part should comprehend the whole? But perhaps he will, at least, aspire to the knowledge of those parts to which he bears some proportion. But, then, the parts of the world are so closely related and connected to one another, that I believe it impossible, thoroughly to understand one without another, or even without understanding the whole.

Man, for example, has some relation to every thing which he has a knowledge of. He has need of place, to contain him; of time, to make out his duration; of elements, to compose his frame; of motion, to preserve his life; of heat and food, for nourishment; of air, for respiration. He sees the light; he feels surrounding bodies; in short, he holds an alliance with the whole world.

In order, therefore, to a knowledge of man, we must know whence it comes to pass, that he should need

air for his subsistence: and to understand the air, we must know by what means it has such an influence on the life of man.

Flame cannot subsist without air: therefore to understand the one we must understand the other.

All things then being causes or effects, dependents or assistants, mediately or immediately, and all being connected with each other by a natural, but imperceptible tie, which unites the most distant and the most diverse; I hold it impossible, either to know the parts without knowing the whole, or to know the whole, without an accurate acquaintance with the parts.

And what seems to complete our inability for the knowledge of things, is, that they are in their own nature simple; whereas we are composed of two opposite natures, spirit and body. For it is impossible that that part of us which reasons, should be any other than spiritual. And if it be pretended we consist of nothing but body, that would exclude us much more from the knowledge of things; for there is nothing so inconceivable as that matter should be capable of knowing itself.

It is this composition, of body and spirit, which made almost all the philosophers confound the idea of things; ascribing to body the properties which belong only to spirit, and to spirit the properties which are peculiar to body. Thus they positively affirm that bodies have a tendency downwards; that they aspire to their centre; that they flee from their own destruction; that they abhor a vacuum; that they have their inclinations, sympathies, and antipathies: which are all things belonging purely to spirit. And when they talk of spirit, they consider it as being in some place, and ascribe to it the power of locomotion, which are things peculiar to body.

Instead of receiving into our minds the genuine ideas of things, we colour the

simple objects which we contemplate, with the qualities of our own compounded being.

Who would not imagine, when we affect to compose every thing of spirit and body, that we really comprehended their union? And yet this, of all things, is what we comprehend the least. Man is to himself the most prodigious object in nature: for he cannot conceive what body is, and still less does he know what spirit is, and least of all, how a body can be united to a spirit. This is the very summit of all his difficulties: and yet this is his own being. *Modus quo corporibus adhæret spiritus, comprehendi ab hominibus non potest: et hoc tamen homo est.*

When among natural things, the knowledge of which is not necessary to us, there are any which we do not know the truth of, it may perhaps not be amiss, that there should be some general error, to fix the minds of men. As, for instance, concerning the moon, to which we ascribe the change of seasons, the progress of diseases, &c. For it is one of the principal disorders of mankind, to have a restless curiosity about things which it is impossible they should understand. And I question whether it is not a less evil, to lie under a mistake about things of this kind, than to labour under this useless curiosity.

If the thunder should fall on low places, poets, and those who do not know how to reason on things of this nature, would be at a loss for want of proofs.

This dog is mine, says the poor child: that is my place in the sun. This is the beginning, and the picture of that tyranny which would usurp the whole earth.

The understanding has a method of its own: which is, by principles and demonstrations. The heart has a method altogether different. We do not prove ourselves deserving of love by a methodical detail of

the causes of love; indeed this would be ridiculous.

Jesus Christ and St. Paul have much oftener used this method of the heart, which is that of charity, than that of the understanding: because their principal design was not so much to inform as to inflame. St. Austin does the same. And this method, chiefly, consists in so digressing on those points, which have a relation to the main design, as to keep it continually in view.

People in common think of Plato or Aristotle as men in fine robes, and as personages always serious and grave. Whereas they were really good kind of men, who could laugh with a friend just as we do. And when they composed their laws and their treatises of polity, it was to amuse and divert themselves. It was the least serious and least philosophical part of their lives. The most philosophical, was to live in plainness and tranquillity.

There are some persons who put a mask upon every thing in nature. There is no king with them, but an august monarch; no such place as Paris, but the capital of the kingdom. There are places in which Paris should be called Paris, and others, in which it should be called the capital of the kingdom.

When, in perusing a discourse, we meet with some words repeated, and yet, on endeavouring to change them, find they are so appropriate that this would spoil the composition, we ought to let them remain. For, then, to alter them would be a mark of envy, which is blind, and cannot see that the repetition is no blemish on such an occasion; for there is no such thing as a general rule on these subjects.

Those who force words, to form antitheses, are like those who make false windows for the sake of symmetry. Their rule is, not to speak correctly, but to make their figures correct.

One language is with re-

lation to another, like a cypher, in which words are changed into words, and not letters into letters. And upon this principle an unknown language may be decyphered.

There is a model of agreeableness and beauty, which consists in a certain relation between our own nature, such as it is, whether weak or strong, and the thing with which we are delighted. Whatever is formed upon this model pleases us: a house, a song, a speech, verse, prose, women, birds, rivers, trees, chambers, dresses. Whatever differs from this model, is always displeasing to persons of true taste.

As we talk of poetical beauty, so we ought to talk of geometrical beauty, and medicinal beauty; and yet we never use these phrases. The reason of which is, that we are well acquainted with the objects of geometry and medicine; but we do not understand wherein that agreeableness consists which is the object of poetry. We are unacquainted with the natural model, which we ought to imitate: and for want of this knowledge, writers have invented a set of fanciful terms, such as the golden age, the wonder of our times, the fatal laurel, the lovely star, &c., and we call this jargon poetical beauty. But if we were to imagine a woman dressed after this pattern, we should have a pretty lady so covered over with looking-glasses and tinsel chains, that, instead of finding her agreeable, we should be unable to keep from laughing at her. For we know better what it is that makes a woman agreeable, than what makes a poem so. But they who do not know this, might, perhaps, admire a lady in such an equipage, and many a village would take her for the queen. Whence some persons have styled sonnets composed after this manner, 'the village queens.'

When in a natural discourse some particular passion or effect is described,

we feel in ourselves the truth of what we hear, which was really in us before, though without our knowledge, and we find ourselves disposed to love the person who has caused us to feel it, for he seems not to have shewn us his goods, but our own; and this kindness makes us think him deserving our esteem: besides that such a coincidence of thought naturally produces love in the heart towards him.

Eloquence must contain that which is agreeable, and that which is real: and the agreeable part must also be real.

When we meet with a composition written in a natural style, we are surprised and enchanted with it, because we expected to see an author, and we find a man. But those who possess true taste are no less surprised, when on opening a book they expect to meet with a man, and find an author. *Plus poetice quam humane locutus est.* Those do real honour to nature, who shew that she is able to speak on every subject, not even excepting theology.

The last thing we are able to decide upon in composing a work, is the arrangement of its parts.

In composition we ought never to turn off the attention from one thing to another, unless it be for the sake of relieving it; and then it must be at a time when this is requisite, and at no other. For he that endeavours to divert his reader without occasion, wearies him. He grows disgusted, and disregards the subject altogether; so hard is it to obtain any thing from men but through pleasure, which is a coin, in exchange for which we give all that people ask.

Men love malignity, yet not toward the unfortunate, but toward those who are at the same time both proud and prosperous: and we shall be deceived, if we judge otherwise of the matter.

Martial's epigram upon

one-eyed men is good for nothing, because it gives them no consolation, and only serves to give an edge to the vain glory of the author. But what is of no use, except to the author, can never be of any value. *Ambitiosa recidet ornamenta.* We should study to please those who possess tenderness and compassion, and not those who are barbarous and inhuman.

A

PRAYER,

IMPLORING OF GOD THE RIGHT USE OF

SICKNESS.

I. O LORD, whose spirit is so good and gracious in all things, and who art so merciful, that not only the prosperities, but even the distresses which happen to Thine elect, are the effects of Thy mercy, grant me grace not to act like an heathen in the state to which Thy justice has brought me; but that, like a true Christian, I may acknowledge Thee for my Father and my God, in whatsoever circumstances I am placed. For the altering of my condition can no way influence Thine. Thou art ever the same, though I am subject to change: Thou art no less God when Thou art afflicting and punishing, than when Thou art consoling and shewing compassion.

II. Thou gavest me health to be spent in serving Thee; and I perverted it to a use altogether profane. Now Thou hast sent a sickness for my correction: O suffer me not to use this likewise to provoke Thee, by my impatience. I abused my health; and Thou hast justly punished me for it: O keep me from abusing Thy punishment. And since the corruption of my nature

is such, that it renders Thy favours pernicious to me; grant, O my God, that Thy all-powerful grace may render Thy chastisements beneficial. If my heart has been filled with the love of the world, while I was in possession of strength, destroy my vigour to promote my salvation; and either by weakness of body, or the zeal of charity, render me incapable of enjoying the world, that my delight may be only in Thee.

III. O God, to whom I must render an exact account of all my actions at the end of my life, and at the end of the world: O God, who only sufferest the world, and all things in the world to subsist, for the trial of Thine elect, and for the punishment of the wicked: O God, who leavest hardened sinners in the delicious, but criminal enjoyment of this world: O God, who causest our bodies to die, and at the hour of death removest the soul from all that it loved in the world: O God, who, at that last moment of my life wilt separate me from all things to which I am attached, and on which my heart has been set: O God, who wilt, at the last day, consume the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures they contain, to shew to all mankind that nothing subsists but Thyself, and that nothing is worthy of love but Thee, since nothing is durable but Thee: O God, who wilt destroy all these vain idols, and all these fatal objects of our affections; I praise Thee, O God, and I will bless Thee all the days of my life, that Thou hast been pleased, in Thy mercy toward me, to anticipate that awful day, by already destroying all things with regard to me, by this state of weakness to which Thou hast reduced me. I praise Thee, O my God, and I will bless Thee all the days of my life, that Thou hast been pleased to make me incapable of enjoying the delights of health, and the pleasures of the world; and that Thou hast,

for my good, in a manner destroyed those deceitful idols, which Thou wilt effectually annihilate, to the confusion of the wicked, in the day of Thy wrath. Grant, O Lord, that I may, in future, judge myself by this destruction, which Thou hast wrought in my behalf; that Thou mayest not hereafter condemn me to that utter destruction which Thou wilt make of my present life, and of the world. For, O Lord, as at the instant of my death I shall find myself separated from the world, stripped of all things, and standing alone in Thy presence, to answer to Thy justice for all the movements of my heart: grant that I may consider myself, in this disease, as in a kind of death, separated from the world, stripped of all the objects of my affections, placed alone in Thy presence, to implore of Thy mercy the conversion of my heart; and that thus I may enjoy great consolation in knowing that Thou art now sending me a sort of death, for the display of Thy mercy, before Thou sendest me death in reality, for the display of Thy justice. Grant then, O my God, that as Thou hast anticipated my death, so I may anticipate the justice of Thy sentence; and that I may so examine myself, before Thy judgment, that I may find mercy hereafter in Thy sight.

IV. Grant, O Lord, that I may in silence adore the order of Thine adorable providence, in the disposal of my life; that Thy rod may comfort me; and that —having lived in the bitterness of my sins while I was in peace,—I may taste the heavenly sweetness of Thy grace during the salutary afflictions with which Thou hast visited me. But I confess, O my God, that my heart is so hardened, so full of worldly ideas, cares, inquietudes, and attachments, that neither health, nor sickness, nor discourses, nor books, nor Thy Holy Scriptures, nor Thy gospel, nor Thy most holy myste-

ries, nor alms, nor fastings, nor mortifications, nor miracles, nor the use of the sacraments, nor the sacrifice of Thy body, nor all my endeavours, nor those of the whole world together, can do any thing at all even to begin my conversion, except Thou accompany them all with the extraordinary assistance of Thy grace. I look up, therefore, O my God, unto Thee, who art God Almighty, to implore a gift, which all creatures together could never bestow. I should not dare to direct my cries unto Thee, were there any other that could hear them. But, O my God, as the conversion of my heart, which I ask of Thee, is a work exceeding all the powers of nature, I can only apply to the Almighty Author and Master of nature. To whom, O Lord, shall I cry; to whom shall I have recourse, but unto Thee? Every thing that is not God is unable to fulfil my desires. It is God Himself that I ask and that I seek: it is to Thee alone, O my God, whom I seek; that I may obtain Thyself. O Lord, open my heart: enter into this rebellious place, that my sins have possessed. They hold it in subjection; do Thou enter, as into the strong man's house; but first bind the strong and powerful enemy, who is the tyrant over it; and take to Thyself the treasures which are there. Lord, take my affections which the world has robbed me of; spoil Thou the world of this treasure; or rather resume it to Thyself, for to Thee it belongs; it is a tribute I owe Thee, for Thine own image is stamped upon it. Thou didst form it there, O Lord, at the moment of my baptism, which was my second birth; but now it is wholly defaced; the image of the world is so strongly engraven on it, that Thine own is no longer discernible. Thou alone wast able to create my soul; Thou alone art able to create it anew. Thou alone couldst form in it Thine image; Thou

alone canst reproduce it, and reimpress that defaced image; that is to say, Jesus Christ, my Saviour; the express image and character of Thine essence.

V. O my God, how happy is the heart which can love so charming an object, where the affection is so honourable, the attachment so beneficial! I feel that I cannot love the world without displeasing Thee, without hurting and dishonouring myself; and yet the world is still the object of my delight. O my God, how happy are the souls whose delight Thou art; for they may give themselves wholly up to the love of Thee, not only without scruple, but even with commendation! How firm and lasting is their happiness! Their expectation can never be defeated; because Thou failest not, and neither life nor death can ever separate them from the object of their desires. The very moment which shall involve the wicked, and their idols, in one common ruin, shall unite the just to Thee in one common glory; and as the one shall perish with the perishable objects to which they had given their affections, the latter shall subsist for ever in that eternal and self-existing object to whom they are so intimately joined. O how happy are those who with the perfect liberty, and yet with the invincible inclination of their will, love perfectly and freely what they are necessarily under obligation to love.

VI. Perfect, O my God, the good desires Thou hast given me. Be Thou their end, as Thou art their beginning. Crown Thy own gifts; for Thy gifts I acknowledge them to be. I acknowledge them, O my God, and so far from presuming that my prayers have that merit that should oblige Thee to grant them, I most humbly confess, that having given up to the creatures this heart which Thou only formedst for Thyself; and not either for the world, or myself; I can expect

no favour but from Thy mercy; since I have nothing in me that can oblige Thee to it; and all the natural movements of my heart, being directed either toward creatures, or toward myself, can only be provoking to Thee. I thank Thee, therefore, O my God, for the good desires Thou hast inspired; and also that Thou enablest me to thank Thee for them.

VII. Touch my heart with repentance for my faults; because without this inward pain, the outward evils with which Thou hast afflicted my body will be a new occasion of sin. Make me rightly to understand that the pains of the body are only the punishment, and the figure together, of those of the soul: but, O Lord, make them prove likewise the remedy; by making me consider, from the pains which I feel, those which I was not sensible of in my soul, though it was diseased, and covered with sores. For, O Lord, the greatest of its maladies is this insensibility, and exceeding weakness, which has taken from it all sense of its own miseries. Make me to feel them deeply, and grant that the rest of my life may be one continued penitence, to wash away the sins I have committed.

VIII. O Lord, although my past life has been free from grievous crimes, the occasions of which Thou hast kept from me; it has still been exceedingly hateful to Thee, from my constant negligence, my misuse of Thy most holy sacraments, my contempt of Thy Word and inspirations, the idleness and total unprofitableness of my actions and thoughts; and the entire waste of all that time which Thou hadst given me, to worship Thee, that I might in all my business seek the means of doing Thy pleasure, and of becoming truly penitent for my daily trespasses,—which are common to the best of men, and therefore require that their whole life should be one continued repentance

without which they are in danger of falling from their righteousness.

IX. Thus, O my God, have I always been rebellious against Thee. Yea, Lord, hitherto I have been always deaf to Thy inspirations; I have despised Thy oracles; I have judged contrary to what Thou judgest: I have contradicted those holy maxims, which Thou hast brought into the world from the bosom of Thine Eternal Father, and according to which Thou wilt judge the world. Thou hast said, "Blessed are they that mourn, and woe unto those who live in consolation." And I have said, "Unhappy are they that mourn, and most happy are they who live in consolation:—Happy are those who enjoy a plentiful fortune, a splendid reputation, and uninterrupted health." And for what reason did I account them happy, but because all these advantages afforded them a greater opportunity of enjoying the creatures; that is, of offending Thee. Yea, Lord, I confess that I esteemed health a good, not because it is a mean of serving Thee by usefulness, of employing more days and nights in Thy service, and of doing good to my neighbours; but because, with it, I could abandon myself, with less restraint, to more of the enjoyments of this life, and better relish its fatal pleasures. Grant me grace, O Lord, to rectify my reason, and conform my sentiments to Thine; that I may account myself happy in affliction, and that while I am incapable of external actions, Thou mayest so purify my thoughts, that they may no longer contradict Thy own; that thus I may find Thee within myself, while my weakness incapacitates me to seek Thee without. For, O Lord, Thy kingdom is in the hearts of the faithful; and I shall find it in myself, if I there discover Thy Spirit and Thy wisdom.

X. But, O Lord, what shall I do to engage Thee to pour down Thy Spirit on

this miserable clay; all that I am is odious in Thy sight; nor can I find any thing in myself that can be acceptable to Thee. I see nothing, O Lord, but my sufferings alone, which have some resemblance to Thine. Look therefore on the evils I now labour under, and on those with which I am threatened. Behold with an eye of mercy the wounds which Thy hand has made. O my Saviour, who lovedst Thy sufferings, even in death: O God, who for no other cause becamest incarnate after the fall of man, and didst take on Thee a body,—but that Thou mightest suffer all the punishment that our sins have deserved: O God, who so lovest bodies exercised with sufferings, that Thou didst choose for Thyself a body the most loaded with sufferings that ever came into the world; accept my body, —not for its own sake, nor for all that it contains, for all deserves Thy wrath,—but on account of the sufferings it endures, which alone can be worthy of Thy love. May my sufferings invite Thee to visit me. But to complete the preparation for Thy stay, grant, O my Saviour, that,—if my body has this in common with Thine, that it suffers for my offences,—my soul may have this likewise in common with Thy soul, to be sorrowful for those offences; and that thus I may suffer with Thee and like Thee, both in my body and in my soul, for the transgressions I have committed.

XI. Grant me, O Lord, grace to join Thy consolations to my sufferings, that I may suffer like a Christian. I pray not to be exempted from pain; for this is the recompence of saints: but I pray that I may not be abandoned to the pains of nature without the comforts of Thy Spirit; for this is the curse of Jews and pagans. I pray not to enjoy fulness of comfort without suffering; for that is the life of glory:

neither do I pray for fulness of suffering without comfort; for that is a Jewish state: but I pray, O Lord, that I may feel at once both the pains of nature for my sins, and the consolations of Thy Spirit by Thy grace; for that is the true state of Christianity. O, may I never feel pain without comfort! But may I feel pain and consolation together, that I may hereafter attain to feel Thy comforts only, without any mixture of pain! For so, O Lord, Thou didst leave the world to languish in natural sufferings without consolation, till the coming of Thine only Son: but now Thou consolest and sweetenest the sufferings of Thy faithful servants by the grace of Thine only Son, and fillest Thy saints with pure felicity in the glory of Thine only Son. These are the wonderful steps by which Thou hast carried on Thy works. Thou hast raised me from the first; O, conduct me to the second; that I may attain the third! O Lord, this mercy I earnestly implore.

XII. Suffer me not, O Lord, to be under such an estrangement from Thee, as to be able to reflect on Thy soul being sorrowful, even unto death, and Thy body being overcome by death for my sins, without rejoicing to suffer both in my body and in my soul. For what is more shameful, and yet more usual with Christians, and with myself, than that while Thou didst sweat blood for the expiation of our offences, we should live in pleasurable gratifications?—and that Christians, who profess to be devoted to Thee; that those who by baptism have renounced the world to become Thy followers; that those who have solemnly pledged themselves in the face of the Church to live and die with Thee; that those who profess to believe that the world persecuted and crucified Thee; that those who believe Thou didst expose Thyself to the wrath of God, and to the

cruelty of men, to redeem them from their sins; that those, I say, who believe all these truths, who consider Thy body as the sacrifice which was offered for their salvation; who look on the pleasures and sins of the world as the only cause of Thy sufferings, and the world itself as Thy murderer; should yet seek to gratify their bodies by those same pleasures in that same world; and that those who could not, without shuddering, behold a man cherishing and caressing the murderer of his father, who had laid down his life for that son,—should live as I have done with full delight in the world, which I know to be in fact the murderer of Him, whom I own for my Father and my God, who was delivered for my personal salvation, and who in His own person bore the punishment of my sins? It was most just, O Lord, that Thou shouldest interrupt so criminal a joy as this, with which I solaced myself in the shadow of death.

XIII. Take, therefore, from me, O Lord, that sorrow—which the love of myself may produce in me, from my sufferings, and from the want of the success I wished to my designs in this world—which had no regard to Thy glory. But create in me a sorrow conformable to Thy own. Let my pains in some measure appease Thy wrath: let them prove the happy occasion of my conversion and salvation. Let me not hereafter wish for health or life, but to spend it and end it for Thee, with Thee, and in Thee. I pray not for health or sickness, life or death; but that Thou wouldst dispose of my health, my sickness, my life, and my death, for Thy glory, for my own salvation, for usefulness to Thy Church, and Thy saints, among whom I hope by Thy grace to be numbered. Thou alone knowest what is expedient for me; Thou art the Sovereign Master; do whatsoever Thou pleasest. Give me, or take away from me;

conform my will to Thine; and grant that,—with an humble and perfect submission, and in a holy confidence,—I may dispose myself to receive the orders of Thine everlasting providence, and may equally adore whatsoever proceeds from Thee.

XIV. Enable me with constant uniformity of mind to receive all sorts of events, forasmuch as we know not what we ought to ask, and I cannot wish for one event rather than another without presumption; and without making myself a judge of, and responsible for, those consequences which Thy wisdom has been pleased to conceal from me. O Lord, I know that I know this one thing only,—that it is good to follow Thee, and that it is wicked to offend Thee. Beyond this, I know not what is best or worst, upon the whole. I know not which is good for me, whether health or sickness, riches or poverty, or any thing else in this world. For this knowledge surpasses the wisdom both of men and of angels; and lies hidden in the secrets of Thy providence, which I adore, and will not dare to pry into.

XV. Grant, O Lord, that being what I am I may conform myself to Thy will; and that being sick as I now am, I may glorify Thee in my sufferings. Without these, I could not attain to Thy glory; which Thou Thyself, O my Saviour, didst not please to attain but by sufferings. It was by the marks of Thy sufferings, that Thou wast made known again to Thy disciples: and it is by the sufferings they endure that Thou also knowest who are Thy disciples. Own me then as Thy disciple, in the afflictions which I endure, in my body and in my mind, for the sins I have committed. And as nothing is acceptable to God unless presented by Thee, unite my will to Thine, and my sufferings to those which Thou hast endured. Unite me to Thyself, fill me with

Thyself, and with Thy Holy Spirit. Enter into my heart, and into my soul; there to sustain my afflictions,—and to continue to endure, in me, what remains of Thy passion; which Thou fulfillest in Thy members, till the perfect consummation of Thy mystical body. So that, being filled by Thee, it may be no longer I who live or suffer, but Thou, O my Saviour, who livest and sufferest in me: that having thus been a small partaker of Thy sufferings, Thou mayest fill me completely with that glory which Thou hast acquired by them; and in which Thou livest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

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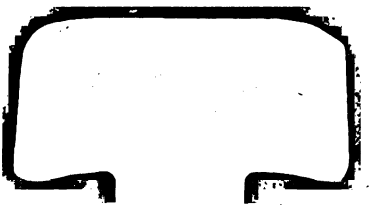

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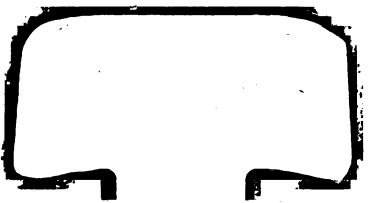

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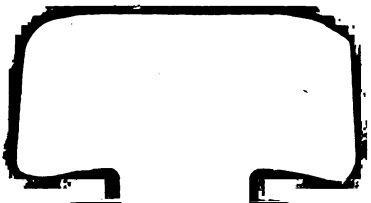
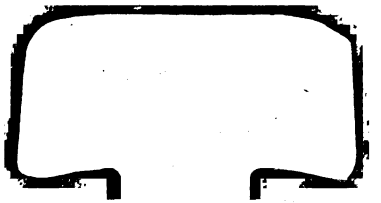
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